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Boyle from R. J. Chapman

M. adds. 109 e. 677

MONEY:

A Comedy

IN FIVE ACTS,

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE LADY OF LYONS," "RICHELIEU," "RIENZI," &c.

NEW EDITION.

'Tis a very good world we live in,
To lend, or to spend, or to give in;
But to beg, or to borrow, or get a man's own,
'Tis the very worst world that ever was known.—*Old Truism.*

Und, es herrscht der Erde Gott, das Geld.—SCHILLER.

LONDON:
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.
1856.

LONDON:
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA,

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET.

MEN.

LORD GLOSSMORE	MR. VINING.
SIR JOHN VESEY, BART., *Knight of the Guelph*, F.R.S., F.S.A.	MR. STRICKLAND.
SIR FREDERICK BLOUNT	MR. LACY.
STOUT	MR. D. REES.
GRAVES	MR. WEBSTER.
EVELYN	MR. MACREADY.
CAPTAIN DUDLEY SMOOTH	MR. WRENCH.
SHARP	MR. WALDRON.
TOKE	MR. OXBERRY.
FRANTZ, *Tailor*	MR. O. SMITH.
TABOURET, *Upholsterer*	MR. HOWE.
MACFINCH, *Jeweller and Silversmith*	MR. GOUGH.
MACSTUCCO, *Architect*	MR. MATHEWS.
KITE, *Horse-dealer*	MR. SANTER.
CRIMSON, *Portrait-painter*	MR. GALLOT.
GRAB, *Publisher*	MR. CAULFIELD.
PATENT, *Coach-builder*	MR. CLARKE.

Members of the *. * * *Club, Servants, &c.*

WOMEN.

LADY FRANKLIN, *half-sister to Sir John Vesey*	MRS. GLOVER.
GEORGINA, *daughter to Sir John*	MISS HORTON.
CLARA, *companion to Lady Franklin, cousin to Evelyn*	MISS FAUCIT.

Scene, London, 1840.

MONEY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A drawing-room in SIR JOHN VESEY'S *house; folding-doors at the back, which open on another drawing-room. To the right, a table with newspapers, books, &c.; to the left, a sofa writing-table.*

SIR JOHN, GEORGINA.

SIR JOHN (*reading a letter edged with black*).

YES, he says at two precisely. "Dear Sir John, as since the death of my sainted Maria,"—Hum!—that's his wife; she made him a martyr, and now he makes her a saint!

GEORGINA.

Well, as since her death?—

SIR JOHN (*reading*).

"I have been living in chambers, where I cannot so well invite ladies, you will allow me to bring Mr. Sharp, the lawyer, to read the will of the late Mr. Mordaunt (to which I am appointed executor) at your house—your daughter being the nearest relation. I shall be with you at two precisely.—Henry Graves."

GEORGINA.

And you really feel sure that poor Mr. Mordaunt has made me his heiress?

SIR JOHN.

Ay, the richest heiress in England. Can you doubt it? Are you not his nearest relation? Niece by your poor mother, his own sister. All the time he was making this enormous fortune in India did we ever miss sending him

little reminiscences of our disinterested affection? When he was last in England, and you only so high, was not my house his home? Didn't I get a surfeit out of complaisance to his execrable curries and pillaws? Didn't he smoke his hookah —nasty old—that is, poor dear man—in my best drawing-room? And didn't you make a point of calling him your "handsome uncle?"—for the excellent creature was as vain as a peacock,—

GEORGINA.

And so ugly!

SIR JOHN.

The dear deceased! Alas, he *was*, indeed;—like a kangaroo in a jaundice! And *if*, after all these marks of attachment, you are *not* his heiress, why then the finest feelings of our nature—the ties of blood—the principles of justice—are implanted in us in vain.

GEORGINA.

Beautiful, sir. Was not that in your last speech at the Freemason's Tavern upon the great Chimney-sweep Question?

SIR JOHN.

Clever girl!—what a memory she has! Sit down, Georgy. Upon this most happy—I mean melancholy—occasion, I feel that I may trust you with a secret. You see this fine house—our fine servants—our fine plate—our fine dinners: every one thinks Sir John Vesey a rich man.

GEORGINA.

And are you not, papa?

SIR JOHN.

Not a bit of it—all humbug, child—all humbug, upon my soul! As you hazard a minnow to hook in a trout, so one guinea thrown out with address is often the best bait for a hundred. There are two rules in life—FIRST, Men are valued not for what they *are*, but what they *seem* to be. SECONDLY, If you have no merit or money of your own, you must trade on the merits and money of other people. My father got the title by services in the army, and died penniless. On the strength of his services I got a pension of 400*l.* a-year; on the strength of 400*l.* a-year I took credit for 800*l.*; on the strength of 800*l.* a-year I married your mother with 10,000*l.*; on the strength of 10,000*l.* I took a credit for 40,000*l.*, and paid Dicky Gossip three guineas a-week to go about everywhere calling me "Stingy Jack!"

GEORGINA.

Ha! ha! A disagreeable nickname.

SIR JOHN.

But a valuable reputation. When a man is called stingy, it is as much as calling him rich; and when a man's called rich, why he's a man universally respected. On the strength of my respectability I wheedled a constituency, changed my politics, resigned my seat to a minister, who, to a man of such stake in the country, could offer nothing less in return than a patent office of 2000*l.* a-year. That's the way to succeed in life. Humbug, my dear!—all humbug, upon my soul.

GEORGINA.

I must say that you—

SIR JOHN.

Know the world, to be sure. Now, for your fortune,—as I spend more than my income, I can have nothing to leave you; yet, even without counting your uncle, you have always passed for an heiress on the credit of your expectations from the savings of "Stingy Jack." The same with your education. I never grudged anything to make a show —never stuffed your head with histories and homilies; but you draw, you sing, you dance, you walk well into a room; and that's the way you [redacted] educated nowadays, in order to become a p[redacted] parents and a blessing to their husband—that is, when they have caught him. Apropos of a husband: you know we thought of Sir Frederick Blount.

GEORGINA.

Ah, papa, he is charming.

SIR JOHN.

He *was so*, my dear, before we knew your poor uncle was dead; but an heiress such as you will be should look out for a duke.—Where the deuce is Evelyn this morning?

GEORGINA.

I've not seen him, papa. What a strange character he is! —so sarcastic; and yet he can be agreeable.

SIR JOHN.

A humorist— a cynic! one never knows how to take him. My private secretary,—a poor cousin,—has not got a shilling, and yet, hang me if he does not keep us all at a sort of a distance.

GEORGINA.

But why do you take him to live with us, papa, since there's no good to be got by it?

SIR JOHN.

There you are wrong; he has a great deal of talent: prepares my speeches, writes my pamphlets, looks up my calculations. My Report on the last Commission has got me a great deal of fame, and has put me at the head of the new one. Besides, he *is* our cousin—he has no salary: kindness to a poor relation always tells well in the world: and Benevolence is a useful virtue,—particularly when you can have it for nothing! With our other cousin, Clara, it was different: her father thought fit to leave me her guardian, though she had not a penny—a mere useless incumbrance; so, you see, I got my half-sister, Lady Franklin, to take her off my hands.

GEORGINA.

How much longer is Lady Franklin's visit to be?

SIR JOHN.

I don't know, my dear; the longer, the better,—for her husband left her a good deal of money at her own disposal. Ah, here she comes!

Enter LADY FRANKLIN, CLARA, [redacted] GEORGINA.

SIR JOHN.

My dear sister, we were just loud in your praises. But how's this?—not in mourning?

LADY FRANKLIN.

Why should I go into mourning for a man I never saw?

SIR JOHN.

Still there may be a legacy.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Then there'll be less cause for affliction! Ha! ha! my dear Sir John, I'm one of those who think feelings a kind of property, and never take credit for them upon false pretences.

SIR JOHN (*aside*).

Very silly woman! But, Clara, I see you are more attentive to the proper decorum; yet you are very, *very*, VERY distantly connected with the deceased—a third cousin, I think?

CLARA.

Mr. Mordaunt once assisted my father, and these poor robes are all the gratitude I can show him.

SIR JOHN.

Gratitude! humph! I am afraid the minx has got expectations.

LADY FRANKLIN.

So, Mr. Graves is the executor—the will is addressed to him? The same Mr. Graves who is always in black—always lamenting his ill fortune and his sainted Maria, who led him the life of a dog?

SIR JOHN.

The very same. His liveries are black—his carriage is black—he always rides a black galloway—and, faith, if he ever marry again, I think he will show his respect to the sainted Maria by marrying a black woman.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! we shall see.—(*Aside*) Poor Graves, I always liked him: he made an excellent husband.

Enter EVELYN (*seats himself and takes up a book, unobserved*).

SIR JOHN.

What a crowd of relations this will brings to light! Mr. Stout, the Political Economist—Lord Glossmore—

LADY FRANKLIN.

Whose grandfather kept a pawnbroker's shop, and who, accordingly, entertains the profoundest contempt for every thing popular, *parvenu*, and plebeian.

SIR JOHN.

Sir Frederick Blount—

LADY FRANKLIN.

Sir Fwedewick Blount, who objects to the letter R as being too *w*ough, and therefore d*w*ops its acquaintance: one of the new class of prudent young gentlemen, who, not having spirits and constitution for the hearty excesses of their predecessors, entrench themselves in the dignity of a lady-like languor. A man of fashion in the last century was riotous and thoughtless—in this he is tranquil and egotistical. He never does anything that is silly, or says anything that is wise. I beg your pardon, my dear; I believe Sir Frederick is an admirer of yours, provided, on reflection, he does not see "what harm it could do him" to fall in love with your beauty and expectations. Then, too, our poor cousin the scholar,—Oh, Mr. Evelyn, there you are!

SIR JOHN.

Evelyn—the very person I wanted: where have you been all day? Have you seen to those papers?—have you written my epitaph on poor Mordaunt?—Latin, you know? —have you reported my speech at Exeter Hall?—have you looked out the debates on the Customs?—and, oh, have you mended up all the old pens in the study?

GEORGINA.

And have you brought me the black floss silk?—have you been to Storr's for my ring?—and, as we cannot go out on this melancholy occasion, did you call at Hookham's for the last HB. and the Comic Annual?

LADY FRANKLIN.

And did you see what was really the matter with my bay horse?—did you get me the Opera-box?—did you buy my little Charley his peg-top?

EVELYN (*always reading*).

Certainly, Paley is right upon that point; for, put the syllogism thus——(*looking up*) Ma'am—Sir—Miss Vesey—you want something of me?——Paley observes, that to assist even the undeserving tends to the better regulation of our charitable feelings—No apologies—I am quite at your service.

SIR JOHN.

Now he's in one of his humours!

LADY FRANKLIN.

You allow him strange liberties, Sir John.

EVELYN.

You will be the less surprised at that, madam, when I inform you that Sir John allows me nothing else.—I am now about to draw on his benevolence.

LADY FRANKLIN.

I beg your pardon, sir, and like your spirit. Sir John, I'm in the way, I see; for I know your benevolence is so delicate that you never allow any one to detect it! [*Walks aside.*

EVELYN.

I could not do your commissions to-day—I have been to visit a poor woman, who was my nurse and my mother's last friend. She is very poor, *very*—sick—dying—and she owes six month's rent!

SIR JOHN.

You know I should be most happy to do anything for yourself. But the nurse—(*Aside.* Some people's nurses are always ill!)—there are so many impostors about!—We'll

talk of it to-morrow. This most mournful occasion takes up all my attention. (*Looking at his watch*) Bless me! so late! I've letters to write, and—none of the pens are mended! [*Exit.*

GEORGINA (*taking out her purse*).

I think I will give it to him—And yet, if I don't get the fortune after all!—Papa allows me so little!—then I *must* have those earrings (*puts up the purse*). Mr. Evelyn, what is the address of your nurse?

EVELYN (*writes and gives it*).

She has a good heart with all her foibles!—Ah! Miss Vesey, if that poor woman had not closed the eyes of my lost mother, Alfred Evelyn would not have been this beggar to your father. [CLARA *looks over the address.*

GEORGINA.

I will certainly attend to it—(*aside*) if I get the fortune.

SIR JOHN (*calling without*).

Georgy, I say!

GEORGINA.

Yes, papa. [*Exit.*

[EVELYN *has seated himself again at the table* (*to the right*), *and leans his face on his hands.*

CLARA.

His noble spirit bowed to this!—Ah, at least here I may give him comfort—(*sits down to write*). But he will recognise my hand.

LADY FRANKLIN.

What bill are you paying, Clara?—putting up a bank-note?

CLARA.

Hush!—O Lady Franklin, you are the kindest of human beings. This is for a poor person—I would not have her know whence it came, or she would refuse it. Would you?—No,—he knows *her* handwriting also!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Will I—what?—give the money myself!—with pleasure! Poor Clara—Why this covers all your savings—and I am so rich!

CLARA.

Nay, I would wish to do all myself!—it is a pride—a duty—it is a joy; and I have so few joys! But, hush!—this way.

[*They retire into the inner room and converse in dumb show.*

EVELYN.

And thus must I grind out my life for ever!—I am ambitious, and Poverty drags me down—I have learning, and Poverty makes me the drudge of fools!—I love, and Poverty stands like a spectre before the altar! But no, no—if, as I believe, I am but loved again, I will—will—what?—turn opium-eater, and dream of the Eden I may never enter! [*Exit.*

LADY FRANKLIN (*to* CLARA).

Yes, I will get my maid to copy and direct this—she writes well, and *her* hand will never be discovered. I will have it done and sent instantly.

[CLARA *advances to the front of the stage, and seats herself*—EVELYN *reading*—*Enter* SIR FREDERICK BLOUNT.

~~SCENE III.~~

~~CLARA, EVELYN, SIR FREDERICK BLOUNT.~~

BLOUNT.

No one in the woom!—Oh, Miss Douglas!—Pway don't let me disturb you. Where is Miss Vesey—Georgina?

[*Taking* CLARA'S *chair as she rises.*

EVELYN (*looking up, gives* CLARA *a chair and re-seats himself*).

(*Aside*) Insolent puppy!

CLARA.

Shall I tell her you are here, Sir Frederick?

BLOUNT.

Not for the world. Vewy pwetty girl this companion!

CLARA.

What did you think of the Panorama the other day, cousin Evelyn?

EVELYN (*reading*).

"I cannot talk with Civet in the room,
A fine-puss gentleman that's all perfume!"

Rather good lines these.

BLOUNT.

Sir!

EVELYN (*offering the book*).

Don't you think so?—Cowper.

BLOUNT (*declining the book*).

Cowper!

EVELYN.

Cowper.

BLOUNT (*shrugging his shoulders to* CLARA).

Stwange person, Mr. Evelyn!—quite a chawacter!—Indeed the Panowama gives you no idea of Naples—a delightful place. I make it a wule to go there evewy second year—I am vewy fond of twavelling. You'd like Wome [Rome]—bad inns, but vewy fine wuins; gives you quite a taste for that sort of thing!

EVELYN (*reading*).

"How much a dunce that has been sent to roam
Excels a dunce that has been kept at home!"

BLOUNT (*aside*).

That fellow Cowper says vewy odd things!—Humph!—it is beneath me to quawwell.—(*Aloud*) It will not take long to wead the will, I suppose. Poor old Mordaunt.—I am his neawest male welation. He was vewy eccentwic. By the way, Miss Douglas, did you wemark my cuwicle?—It is bwinging cuwicles into fashion. I should be most happy if you will allow me to dwive you out. Nay—nay—I should, upon my word. [*Trying to take her hand.*

EVELYN (*starting up*).

A wasp!—a wasp!—just going to settle. Take care of the wasp, Miss Douglas.

BLOUNT.

A wasp!—where?—don't bwing it this way.—Some people don't mind them! I've a particular dislike to wasps;—they sting damnably!

EVELYN.

I beg pardon—it's only a gad-fly.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Sir John will be happy to see you in his study, Sir Frederick. [*Exit* Servant.

BLOUNT.

Vewy well. Upon my word, there is something vewy nice about this girl. To be sure, I love Georgina—but if this one would take a fancy to me—(*thoughtfully*) Well, I don't see what harm it could do me!—*Au plaisir!* [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

EVELYN, CLARA.

EVELYN.

Clara!

CLARA.

Cousin!

EVELYN.

And you, too, are a dependant!

CLARA.

But on Lady Franklin, who seeks to make me forget it.

EVELYN.

Ay, but can the world forget it? This insolent condescension—this coxcombry of admiration—more galling than the arrogance of contempt!—Look you, now—Robe Beauty in silk and cachemire—hand Virtue into her chariot—lackey their caprices—wrap them from the winds—fence them round with a golden circle—and Virtue and Beauty are as goddesses, both to peasant and to prince. Strip them of the adjuncts—see Beauty and Virtue poor—dependent—solitary—walking the world defenceless; oh, *then* the devotion changes its character—the same crowd gather eagerly around—fools—fops—libertines—not to worship at the shrine, but to sacrifice the victim!

CLARA.

My cousin, you are cruel!

EVELYN.

Forgive me! There is something when a man's heart is better than his fortunes, that makes even affection bitter. Mortification for myself—it has ceased to chafe me. I can mock where I once resented. But, *you*—YOU, so delicately framed and nurtured—one slight to you—one careless look—one disdainful tone—makes me feel the true curse of the poor man. His pride gives armour to *his own* breast, but it has no shield to protect another!

CLARA.

But I, too, have pride of my own—I, too, can smile at the pointless insolence——

EVELYN.

Smile—and he took your hand!—Oh, Clara, you know not the tortures that I suffer hourly! When others approach you—young—fair—rich—the sleek darlings of the

world—I accuse you of your very beauty—I writhe beneath every smile that you bestow. No—speak not!—my heart has broken its silence, and you shall hear the rest. For you I have endured the weary bondage of this house—the fool's gibe—the hireling's sneer—the bread, purchased by toils that should have led me to loftier ends: yes, to see you—hear you—breathe the same air—be ever at hand—that if others slighted, from one at least you might receive the luxury of respect:—for this—for this I have lingered, suffered, and forborne. Oh, Clara, we are orphans both—friendless both: you are all in the world to me—turn not away—my very soul speaks in these words—I LOVE YOU.

CLARA.

—— No—Evelyn—Alfred—No! say it not—think it not! it were madness.

EVELYN.

Madness!—Nay, hear me yet. I am poor—penniless—a beggar for bread to a dying servant. True!—But I have a heart of iron! I have knowledge—patience—health,—and my love for you gives me at last ambition! I have trifled with my own energies till now, for I despised all things till I loved you. With you to toil for—your step to support—your path to smooth—and I—I, poor Alfred Evelyn—promise at last to win for you even fame and fortune. Do not withdraw your hand—*this* hand—shall it not be mine.

CLARA.

—— Ah, Evelyn! Never—never!

EVELYN.

Never!

CLARA.

—— Forget this folly; our union is impossible, and to talk of love were to deceive both!

EVELYN (*bitterly*).

Because I am poor!

CLARA.

—— And *I too!* A marriage of privation—of penury—of days that dread the morrow! I have seen such a lot! Never return to this again.

EVELYN.

Enough—you are obeyed. I deceived myself—ha!—ha!—I fancied that I too was loved. I, whose youth is already half gone with care and toil!—whose mind is soured—whom nobody *can* love—who ought to have loved no one!

CLARA (*aside*).

—— And if it were only *I* to suffer, or perhaps to starve!—Oh, what shall I say? Evelyn—Cousin!

EVELYN.

Madam.

CLARA.

—— Alfred—I—I—

EVELYN.

Reject me!

CLARA.

—— Yes! it is past! [*Exit.*

EVELYN.

Let me think. It was yesterday her hand trembled when mine touched it. And the rose I gave her—yes, she pressed her lips to it once when she seemed as if she saw me not. But it was a trap—a trick—for I was as poor then as now. This will be a jest for them all! Well, courage! it is but a poor heart that a coquette's contempt can break! And now that I care for no one, the world is but a great chess-board, and I will sit down in earnest, and play with Fortune!

Enter LORD GLOSSMORE, *preceded by* Servant.

SERVANT.

I will tell Sir John, my Lord!

[EVELYN *takes up the newspaper.*

GLOSSMORE.

The secretary—hum—Fine day, sir; any news from the East?

EVELYN.

Yes!—all the wise men have gone back there!

GLOSSMORE.

Ha, ha!—not all, for here comes Mr. Stout, the great political economist.

STOUT, GLOSSMORE, EVELYN.

STOUT.

Good morning, Glossmore.

GLOSSMORE.

Glossmore!—the parvenu!

STOUT.

Afraid I might be late—Been detained at the Vestry—Astonishing how ignorant the English poor are!—Took me an hour and a half to beat it into the head of a stupid old widow, with nine children, that to allow her three shillings a-week was against all the rules of public morality!

EVELYN.

Excellent!—admirable!—your hand, sir!

GLOSSMORE.

What! you approve such doctrines, Mr. Evelyn? Are old women only fit to be starved?

EVELYN.

Starved! popular delusion! Observe, my Lord—to squander money upon those who starve, is only to afford encouragement to starvation!

STOUT.

A very superior person that!

GLOSSMORE.

Atrocious principles! Give me the good old times, when it was the duty of the rich to succour the distressed.

EVELYN.

On second thoughts, *you* are right, my Lord. I, too, know a poor woman—ill—dying—in want. Shall *she*, too, perish?

GLOSSMORE.

Perish! horrible!—in a Christian country. Perish! Heaven forbid!

EVELYN (*holding out his hand*).

What, then, will you give her?

GLOSSMORE.

Ehem! Sir—the parish ought to give.

STOUT.

No!—No!—No! Certainly not! [*With great vehemence.*

GLOSSMORE.

No! no! But I say yes! yes! And if the parish refuse to maintain the poor, the only way left to a man of firmness and resolution, holding the principles that I do, and adhering to the constitution of our fathers, is to force the poor *on* the parish by never giving them a farthing one's self.

[redacted].

SIR JOHN, BLOUNT, LADY FRANKLIN, GEORGINA, GLOSSMORE, STOUT, EVELYN.

SIR JOHN.

How d'ye do?—Ah! How d'ye do, gentlemen? This is a most melancholy meeting! The poor deceased!—what a man he was!

BLOUNT.

I was chwistened Fwedewick after him! He was my first cousin.

SIR JOHN.

And Georgina his own niece—next of kin!—an excellent man, though odd—a kind heart, but no liver! I sent him twice a-year thirty dozen of the Cheltenham waters. It's a comfort to reflect on these little attentions at such a time.

STOUT.

And I, too, sent him the Parliamentary Debates regularly, bound in calf. He was my second cousin—sensible man—and a follower of Malthus: never married to increase the surplus population, and fritter away his money on his own children. And now—

EVELYN.

He reaps the benefit of celibacy in the prospective gratitude of every cousin he had in the world.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! ha!

SIR JOHN.

Hush! hush! decency, Lady Franklin; decency!

Enter Servant. [redacted]

SERVANT.

Mr. Graves—Mr. Sharp.

SIR JOHN.

Oh, here's Mr. Graves; that's Sharp the lawyer, who brought the will from Calcutta.

SCENE VII.

GRAVES, SHARP, SIR JOHN, etc.

Chorus of SIR JOHN, GLOSSMORE, BLOUNT, STOUT.
Ah, Sir—Ah, Mr. Graves!

[GEORGINA *holds her handkerchief to her eyes.*

SIR JOHN.

A sad occasion!

GRAVES.

But everything in life is sad. Be comforted, Miss Vesey. True, you have lost an uncle; but I—I have lost a wife—such a wife!—the first of her sex—and the second cousin of the defunct! Excuse me, Sir John; at the sight of your mourning my wounds bleed afresh.

[Servants *hand round wine and sandwiches.*

SIR JOHN.

Take some refreshment—a glass of wine.

GRAVES.

Thank you!—(very fine sherry!)—Ah! my poor sainted Maria! Sherry was *her* wine; everything reminds me of Maria! Ah, Lady Franklin! *you* knew her. Nothing in life can charm me now.—(*Aside*) A monstrous fine woman that!

SIR JOHN.

And now to business. Evelyn, you may retire.

SHARP (*looking at his notes*).

Evelyn—any relation to Alfred Evelyn?

EVELYN.

The same.

SHARP.

Cousin to the deceased, seven times removed. Be seated, sir; there may be some legacy, though trifling: all the relations, however distant, should be present.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Then Clara is related—I will go for her. [*Exit.*

GEORGINA.

Ah, Mr. Evelyn; I hope you will come in for something—a few hundreds, or even more.

SIR JOHN.

Silence! Hush! Wugh! ugh! Attention!

[*While the Lawyer opens the Will, re-enter* LADY FRANKLIN *and* CLARA.

SHARP.

The will is very short—being all personal property. He was a man that always came to the point.

SIR JOHN.

I wish there were more like him!—(*Groans and shakes his head.*) [*Chorus groan and shake their heads.*

SHARP (*reading*).

"I, Frederic James Mordaunt, of Calcutta, being at the present date of sound mind, though infirm body, do hereby give, will, and bequeath—Imprimis, To my second cousin, Benjamin Stout, Esq., of Pall Mall, London——

[*Chorus exhibit lively emotion.*

Being the value of the Parliamentary Debates with which he has been pleased to trouble me for some time past—deducting the carriage thereof, which he always forgot to pay—the sum of 14*l.* 2*s.* 4*d.*" [*Chorus breathe more freely.*

STOUT.

Eh, what?—14*l.*? Oh, hang the old miser!

SIR JOHN.

Decency—decency! Proceed, sir.

SHARP.

"Item.—To Sir Frederick Blount, Baronet, my nearest male relative"—— [*Chorus exhibit lively emotion.*

BLOUNT.

Poor old boy!

[GEORGINA *puts her arm over* BLOUNT'S *chair.*

SHARP.

"Being, as I am informed, the best-dressed young gentleman in London, and in testimony to the only merit I ever heard he possessed, the sum of 500*l.* to buy a dressing-case."

[*Chorus breathe more freely;* GEORGINA *catches her father's eye and removes her arm.*

BLOUNT (*laughing confusedly*).

Ha! ha! ha! Vewy poor wit!—low!—vewy—vewy low!

SIR JOHN.

Silence, now, will you?

SHARP.

"Item.—To Charles Lord Glossmore—who asserts that he is my relation—my collection of dried butterflies, and the pedigree of the Mordaunts from the reign of King John."

[*Chorus as before.*

GLOSSMORE.

Butterflies!—Pedigree!—I disown the plebeian!

SIR JOHN (*angrily*).

Upon my word, this is too revolting! Decency! Go on.

SHARP.

"Item.—To Sir John Vesey, Baronet, Knight of the Guelph, F.R.S., F.S.A., &c. [*Chorus as before.*

SIR JOHN.

Hush! *Now* it is really interesting!

SHARP.

"Who married my sister, and who sends me every year the Cheltenham waters, which nearly gave me my death, I bequeath—the empty bottles."

SIR JOHN.

Why, the ungrateful, rascally, old ——

CHORUS.

Decency, Sir John—decency!

SHARP.

"Item.—To Henry Graves, Esq. of the Albany ——"

[*Chorus as before.*

GRAVES.

Pooh, gentlemen—my usual luck—not even a ring, I dare swear!

SHARP.

"The sum of 5000*l.* in the Three per Cents!"

LADY FRANKLIN.

I wish you joy.

GRAVES.

Joy—pooh! Three per Cents!—Funds sure to go! Had it been *land*, now—though only an acre!—Just like my luck!

SHARP.

"Item.—To my niece Georgina Vesey——"

[*Chorus as before.*

SIR JOHN.

Ah, now it comes!

SHARP.

The sum of 10,000*l.* India stock, being, with her father's reputed savings, as much as a single woman ought to possess."

SIR JOHN.

And what the devil, then, does the old fool do with all his money?

CHORUS.

Really, Sir John, this is too revolting. Decency! Hush!

SHARP.

"And, with the aforesaid legacies and exceptions, I do will and bequeath the whole of my fortune, in India Stock, Bonds, Exchequer Bills, Three per Cent Consols, and in the Bank of Calcutta (constituting him hereby sole residuary legatee and joint executor with the aforesaid Henry Graves, Esq.), to Alfred Evelyn, now or formerly of Trinity College, Cambridge—" [*Universal excitement.*

Being, I am told, an oddity like myself—the only one of my relations who never fawned on me; and who, having known privation, may the better employ wealth."—And now, Sir, I have only to wish you joy, and give you this letter from the deceased—I believe it is important.

EVELYN (*crossing over to* CLARA).

Ah, Clara, if you had but loved me!

CLARA (*turning away*).

And his wealth, even more than poverty, separates us for ever! [*Omnes crowd round to congratulate* EVELYN.

SIR JOHN (*to* GEORGINA).

Go, child—put a good face on it—he's an immense match! My dear fellow, I wish you joy: you are a great man now—a very great man!

EVELYN (*aside*).

And *her* voice alone is silent!

LORD GLOSSMORE.

If I can be of any use to you ——

STOUT.

Or I, sir ——

BLOUNT.

Or I! Shall I put you up at the clubs?

SHARP.

You will want a man of business. I transacted all Mr. Mordaunt's affairs.

SIR JOHN.

Tush, tush! Mr. Evelyn is at home *here*—always looked on him as a son! Nothing in the world we would not do for him! Nothing!

EVELYN.

Lend me 10*l.* for my old nurse!

[*Chorus put their hands into their pockets.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An ante-room in EVELYN'S *new house; at one corner, behind a large screen,* MR. SHARP *writing at a desk, books and parchments before him.*—MR. CRIMSON, *the portrait-painter;* MR. GRAB, *the publisher;* MR. MACSTUCCO, *the architect;* MR. TABOURET, *the upholsterer;* MR. MACFINCH, *the silversmith;* MR. PATENT, *the coachmaker;* MR. KITE, *the horse-dealer; and* MR. FRANTZ, *the tailor.*—(Servants *cross to and fro the stage.*)

PATENT (*to* FRANTZ, *showing a drawing*).

Yes, sir; this is the Evelyn vis-à-vis! No one more the fashion than Mr. Evelyn. Money makes the man, sir.

FRANTZ.

But de tailor, de schneider, make de gentleman! It is Mr. Frantz, of St. James's, who take his measure and his cloth, and who make de fine handsome noblemen and gentry, where de faders and de mutters make only de ugly little naked boys!

MACSTUCCO.

He's a mon o' teeste, Mr. Evelyn. He taulks o' buying a veela (villa), just to pool down and build oop again.—Ah, Mr. Macfinch! a design for a piece of pleete, eh?

MACFINCH (*showing the drawing*).

Yees, sir, the shield o' Alexander the Great, to hold ices and lemonade! It will coost two thousand poon'!

MACSTUCCO.

And it's dirt cheap—ye're Scotch, arn't ye?

MACFINCH.

Aberdounshire!—scraitch me, and I'll scraitch you!

[*Door at the back thrown open.—Enter* EVELYN.

EVELYN.

A levee, as usual. Good day. Ah, Tabouret, your designs for the draperies; very well. And what do you want, Mr. Crimson?

CRIMSON.

Sir, if you'd let me take your portrait, it would make my fortune. Every one says you're the finest judge of paintings?

EVELYN.

Of paintings! paintings! Are you sure I'm a judge of paintings?

CRIMSON.

Oh, sir, didn't you buy the great Correggio for 4000*l.*?

EVELYN.

True—I see. So 4000*l.* makes me an excellent judge of paintings. I'll call on you, Mr. Crimson,—good day. Mr. Grab—oh, you're the publisher who once refused me 5*l.* for my poem? You are right, it was a sad doggerel.

GRAB.

Doggerel! Mr. Evelyn, it was sublime! But times were bad then.

EVELYN.

Very bad times with me.

GRAB.

But now, sir, if you will give me the preference, I'll push it, sir,—I'll push it! I only publish for poets in high life, sir; and a gentleman of your station ought to be pushed!—500*l.* for the poem, sir!

EVELYN.

500*l.* when I don't want it, where 5*l.* once would have seemed a fortune.

"Now I am rich, what value in the lines!
How the wit brightens—how the sense refines!"

[*Turns to the rest, who surround him.*

KITE.

Thirty young horses from Yorkshire, sir!

PATENT (*showing drawing*).

The Evelyn vis-à-vis!

MACFINCH (*showing drawing*).

The Evelyn salver!

FRANTZ (*opening his bundle and with dignity*).

Sare, I have brought de coat—de great Evelyn coat.

EVELYN.

Oh, go to—— that is, go home! Make me as celebrated for vis-à-vis, salvers, furniture, and coats, as I already am for painting, and shortly shall be for poetry. I resign myself to you—go! [*Exeunt* MACFINCH, PATENT, &c.

SCENE II.

MONEY.

Enter STOUT.

EVELYN.

Stout, you look heated!

STOUT.

I hear you have just bought the great Groginhole property.

EVELYN.

It is true. Sharp says it's a bargain.

STOUT.

Well, my dear friend Hopkins, member for Groginhole, can't live another month—but the interests of mankind forbid regret for individuals! The patriot Popkins intends to start for the borough the instant Hopkins is dead!—your interest will secure his election!—now is your time!—put yourself forward in the march of enlightenment!——By all that is bigoted, here comes Glossmore!

~~SCENE II.~~

STOUT, GLOSSMORE, EVELYN; SHARP *still at his desk.*

GLOSSMORE.

So lucky to find you at home! Hopkins, of Groginhole, is not long for this world. Popkins, the brewer, is already canvassing underhand (so very ungentlemanlike!). Keep your interest for young Lord Cipher—a most valuable candidate. This is an awful moment—the CONSTITUTION depends on his return! Vote for Cipher!

STOUT.

Popkins is your man!

EVELYN (*musingly*).

Cipher and Popkins—Popkins and Cipher! Enlightenment and Popkins—Cipher and the Constitution! I AM puzzled! Stout, I am not known at Groginhole.

STOUT.

Your *property*'s known there!

EVELYN.

But purity of election—independence of votes——

STOUT.

To be sure: Cipher bribes *abominably*. Frustrate his schemes—preserve the liberties of the borough—turn every man out of his house who votes against enlightenment and Popkins!

EVELYN.

Right!—down with those who take the liberty to admire any liberty except *our* liberty! That *is* liberty!

GLOSSMORE.

Cipher has a stake in the country—will have 50,000*l.* a-year—Cipher will never give a vote without considering beforehand how people of 50,000*l.* a-year will be affected by the motion.

EVELYN.

Right: for as without law there would be no property, so to be the law for property is the only proper property of law!—That *is* law.

STOUT.

Popkins is all for economy—there's a sad waste of the public money—they give the Speaker 5000*l.* a-year, when I've a brother-in-law who takes the chair at the vestry, and who assures me confidentially he'd consent to be Speaker for half the money!

GLOSSMORE.

Enough, Mr. Stout.—Mr. Evelyn has too much at stake for a leveller.

STOUT.

And too much sense for a bigot.

EVELYN.

Mr. Evelyn has no politics at all!—Did you ever play at *battledore?*

BOTH.

Battledore?

EVELYN.

Battledore!—that is a contest between two parties: both parties knock about something with singular skill—something is kept up—high—low—here—there—everywhere—nowhere! How grave are the players! how anxious the bystanders! how noisy the battledores! But when this something falls to the ground, only fancy—it's nothing but cork and feather! Go, and play by yourselves—I'm no hand at it!

STOUT (*aside*).

Sad ignorance!—Aristocrat!

GLOSSMORE.

Heartless principles!—Parvenu!

STOUT.

Then you don't go *against* us?—I'll bring Popkins to-morrow.

GLOSSMORE.

Keep yourself free till I present Cipher to you.

STOUT.

I must go to inquire after Hopkins. The return of Popkins will be an era in history. [*Exit.*

GLOSSMORE.

I must be off to the club—the eyes of the country are upon Groginhole. If Cipher fail, the constitution is gone! [*Exit.*

EVELYN.

Both sides alike! Money *versus* Man!—Sharp, come here—let me look at you! You are my agent, my lawyer, my man of business. I believe you honest;—but what *is* honesty?—where does it exist?—in what part of us?

SHARP.

In the heart, I suppose, sir.

EVELYN.

Mr. Sharp, it exists in the breeches pocket! Observe: I lay this piece of yellow earth on the table—I contemplate you both;—the man there—the gold here! Now, there is many a man in those streets honest as you are, who moves, thinks, feels, and reasons as well as we do; excellent in form—imperishable in soul; who, if his pockets were three days empty, would sell thought, reason, body, and soul too, for that little coin! Is that the fault of the man?—no! it is the fault of mankind! God made man; behold what mankind have made a god! When I was poor, I hated the world; now I am rich, I despise it! Fools—knaves—hypocrites!——By the bye, Sharp, send 100*l.* to the poor bricklayer whose house was burnt down yesterday——

Enter GRAVES.

Ah, Graves, my dear friend! what a world this is!—a cur of a world, that fawns on its master, and bites the beggar! Ha! ha! it fawns on *me* now, for the beggar has bought the cur.

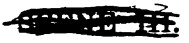
GRAVES.

It is an atrocious world!—But astronomers say that there is a travelling comet which must set it on fire one day,—and that's some comfort!

EVELYN.

Every hour brings its gloomy lesson—the temper sours—the affections wither—the heart hardens into stone! Zounds, Sharp! what do you stand gaping there for?—have you no bowels?—why don't you go and see to the bricklayer?

[*Exit* SHARP.



GRAVES, EVELYN.

EVELYN.

Graves, of all my new friends—and their name is Legion—you are the only one I esteem; there is sympathy between us—we take the same views of life. I am cordially glad to see you!

GRAVES (*groaning*).

Ah! why should you be glad to see a man so miserable?

EVELYN.

Because I am miserable myself.

GRAVES.

You! Pshaw! *you* have not been condemned to lose a wife!

EVELYN.

But, plague on it, man, I may be condemned to take one! —Sit down, and listen. I want a confidant!—Left fatherless, when yet a boy, my poor mother grudged herself food to give me education. Some one had told her that learning was better than house and land—that's a lie, Graves!

GRAVES.

A scandalous lie, Evelyn!

EVELYN.

On the strength of that lie I was put to school—sent to college, a sizar. Do you know what a sizar is? In pride he is a gentleman—in knowledge he is a scholar—and he crawls about, amidst gentlemen and scholars, with the livery of a pauper on his back! I carried off the great prizes—I became distinguished—I looked to a high degree, leading to a fellowship; that is, an independence for myself—a home for my mother. One day a young lord insulted me—I retorted—he struck me—refused apology—refused redress. I was a sizar!—a Pariah!—a thing to *be* struck! Sir, I was at least a man, and I horsewhipped him in the hall before the eyes of the whole College! A few days, and the lord's chastisement was forgotten. The next day, the sizar was expelled—the career of a life blasted. That is the difference between Rich and Poor: it takes a whirlwind to move the one—a breath may uproot the other! I came to London. As long as my mother lived, I had one to toil for; and I did toil—did hope—did struggle to be something yet.

She died, and then, somehow, my spirit broke—I resigned myself to my fate; the Alps above me seemed too high to ascend—I ceased to care what became of me. At last I submitted to be the poor relation—the hanger-on and gentleman-lackey of Sir John Vesey. But I had an object in that—there was one in that house whom I had loved at the first sight.

GRAVES.

And were you loved again?

EVELYN.

I fancied it, and was deceived. Not an hour before I inherited this mighty wealth I confessed my love and was rejected because I was poor. Now, mark: you remember the letter which Sharp gave me when the will was read?

GRAVES.

Perfectly; what were the contents?

EVELYN.

After hints, cautions, and admonitions—half in irony, half in earnest (ah, poor Mordaunt had known the world!), it proceeded—but I'll read it to you:—"Having selected you as my heir, because I think money a trust to be placed where it seems likely to be best employed, I now—not impose a condition, but ask a favour. If you have formed no other and insuperable attachment, I could wish to suggest your choice: my two nearest female relations are my niece Georgina, and my third cousin, Clara Douglas, the daughter of a once dear friend. If you could see in either of these one whom you could make your wife, such would be a marriage that, if I live long enough to return to England, I would seek to bring about before I die." My friend, this is not a legal condition—the fortune does not *rest* on it; yet, need I say that my gratitude considers it a moral obligation? Several months have elapsed since thus called upon—I ought now to decide: you hear the names—Clara Douglas is the woman who rejected me!

GRAVES.

But now she would accept you!

EVELYN.

And do you think I am so base a slave to passion, that I would owe to my gold what was denied to my affection?

GRAVES.

But you must choose one; in common gratitude, you *ought* to do so—yes, there you are right. Besides, you are constantly at the house—the world observes it: you must

have raised hopes in one of the girls. Yes; it is time to decide between her whom you love and her whom you do not!

EVELYN.

Of the two, then, I would rather marry where I should exact the least. A marriage, to which each can bring sober esteem and calm regard, may not be happiness, but it may be content. But to marry one whom you could adore, and whose heart is closed to you—to yearn for the treasure, and only to claim the casket—to worship the statue that you never may warm to life—Oh! such a marriage would be a hell, the more terrible because Paradise was in sight.

GRAVES.

Georgina is pretty, but vain and frivolous.—(*Aside*) But he has no right to be fastidious—he has never known Maria!—(*Aloud*) Yes, my dear friend, now I think on it, you *will* be as wretched as myself!—When you are married we will mingle our groans together.

EVELYN.

You may misjudge Georgina; she may have a nobler nature than appears on the surface. On the day, but before the hour, in which the will was read, a letter, in a strange or disguised hand, signed "*From an unknown friend to Alfred Evelyn,*" and enclosing what to a girl would have been a considerable sum, was sent to a poor woman for whom I had implored charity, and whose address I had only given to Georgina.

GRAVES.

Why not assure yourself?

EVELYN.

Because I have not dared. For sometimes, against my reason, I have hoped that it might be Clara! (*Taking a letter from his bosom and looking at it.*) No, I can't recognise the hand. Graves, I detest that girl!

GRAVES.

Who? Georgina?

EVELYN.

No; Clara! But I've already, thank Heaven! taken some revenge upon her. Come nearer.—(*Whispers*) I've bribed Sharp to say that Mordaunt's letter to me contained a codicil leaving Clara Douglas 20,000*l.*

GRAVES.

And didn't it? How odd, then, not to have mentioned her in his will!

EVELYN.

One of his caprices: besides, Sir John wrote him word that Lady Franklin had adopted her. But I'm glad of it—I've paid the money—she's no more a dependant. No one can insult her now—she owes it all to me, and does not guess it, man—does not guess it!—owes it to me,—me whom she rejected;—me, the poor scholar!—Ha! ha!—there's some spite in that, eh?

GRAVES.

You're a fine fellow, Evelyn, and we understand each other. Perhaps Clara may have seen the address, and dictated this letter after all!

EVELYN.

Do you think so?—I'll go to the house this instant!

GRAVES.

Eh? Humph! Then I'll go with you. That Lady Franklin is a fine woman! If she were not so gay, I think —I could——

EVELYN.

No; no; don't think any such thing; women are even worse than men.

GRAVES.

True; to love is a boy's madness!

EVELYN.

To feel is to suffer.

GRAVES.

To hope is to be deceived.

EVELYN.

I have done with romance!

GRAVES.

Mine is buried with Maria!

EVELYN.

If Clara did but write this——

GRAVES.

Make haste, or Lady Franklin will be out!—A vale of tears—a vale of tears!

EVELYN.

A vale of tears, indeed! [*Exeunt.*

Re-enter GRAVES *for his hat.*

GRAVES.

And I left my hat behind me! Just like my luck! If I had been bred a hatter, little boys would have come into the world without heads.* [*Exit.*

* For this melancholy jest Mr. Graves is indebted to a poor Italian poet.

SCENE II.

Drawing-rooms at SIR JOHN VESEY'S, *as in Act I. Scene I.*
LADY FRANKLIN, CLARA, Servant.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Past two, and I have so many places to go to! Tell Philipps I want the carriage directly—instantly.

SERVANT.

I beg pardon, my lady; Philipps told me to say the young horse had fallen lame, and could not be used to-day.

[*Exit.*

LADY FRANKLIN.

Well, on second thoughts, that is lucky; now I have an excuse for not making a great many tedious visits. I must borrow Sir John's horses for the ball to-night. Oh, Clara, you must see my new turban from Carson's—the prettiest thing in the world, and so becoming!

CLARA.

Ah, Lady Franklin, you'll be sorry—but—but——

LADY FRANKLIN.

But what?

CLARA.

Such a misfortune! poor Smith is in tears—I promised to break it to you. Your little Charley had been writing his copy, and spilt the ink on the table; and Smith not seeing it—and taking out the turban to put in the pearls as you desired—she—she——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! laid it on the table, and the ink spoilt it. Ha! ha!—how well I can fancy the face she made! Seriously, on the whole it is fortunate; for I think I look best, after all, in the black hat and feathers.

CLARA.

Dear Lady Franklin, you really have the sweetest temper!

LADY FRANKLIN.

I hope so—for it's the most becoming turban a woman can wear. Think of that when you marry. Oh, talking of marriage, I've certainly made a conquest of Mr. Graves.

CLARA.

Mr. Graves! I thought he was inconsolable!

LADY FRANKLIN.

For his sainted Maria! Poor man! not contented with plaguing him while she lived, she must needs haunt him now she is dead.

CLARA.

But why does he regret her?

LADY FRANKLIN.

Why? Because he has everything to make him happy—easy fortune, good health, respectable character. And since it is his delight to be miserable, he takes the only excuse the world will allow him. For the rest—it's the way with widowers; that is, whenever they mean to marry again. But, my dear Clara, you seem absent—pale—unhappy——tears, too?

CLARA.

No—no—not tears. No!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ever since Mr. Mordaunt left you 20,000*l.* every one admires you. Sir Frederick is desperately smitten.

CLARA (*with disdain*).

Sir Frederick!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ah! Clara, be comforted—I know your secret: I am certain that Evelyn loves you.

CLARA.

He did—it is past now. He misconceived me when he was poor; and now he is rich, it is not for me to explain.

LADY FRANKLIN.

My dear child, happiness is too rare to be sacrificed to a scruple. Why does he come here so often?

CLARA.

Perhaps for Georgina!

Enter SIR JOHN (*turns over the books, &c., on the table, as if to look for the newspaper*).

LADY FRANKLIN.

Pooh! Georgina is my niece; she is handsome and accomplished—but her father's worldliness has spoilt her nature—she is not worthy of Evelyn! Behind the humour of his irony there is something noble—something that may yet be great. For his sake as well as yours let me at least——

CLARA.

Recommend me to his pity? Ah, Lady Franklin! if he addressed me from dictation, I should again refuse him.

No; if he cannot read my heart—if he will not seek to read it, let it break unknown.

LADY FRANKLIN.

You mistake me, my dear child: let me only tell him that you dictated that letter—that you sent that money to his old nurse. Poor Clara! it was your little all. He will then know, at least, if avarice be your sin.

CLARA.

He would have guessed it, had *his* love been like *mine*.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Guessed it!—nonsense! The handwriting unknown to him—every reason to think it came from Georgina.

SIR JOHN (*aside*).

Hum! Came from Georgina!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Come, *let* me tell him *this*. I know the effect it would have upon his choice.

CLARA.

Choice! oh, that humiliating word! No, Lady Franklin, no! Promise me!

LADY FRANKLIN.

But——

CLARA.

No! Promise—faithfully—sacredly.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Well, I promise.

CLARA.

You know how fearful is my character—no infant is more timid: if a poor spider cross the floor, you often laugh to see me grow pale and tremble; and yet I would lay this hand upon the block — I would walk barefoot over the ploughshare of the old ordeal—to save Alfred Evelyn one moment's pain. But I have refused to share his poverty, and I should die with shame if he thought I had now grown enamoured of his wealth. My kind friend, you will keep your promise?

LADY FRANKLIN.

Yes, since it must be so.

CLARA.

Thanks. I—I—forgive me—I am not well. [*Exit.*

LADY FRANKLIN.

What fools these girls are!—they take as much pains to lose a husband as a poor widow does to get one!

SIR JOHN.

Have you seen "The Times" newspaper? Where the deuce is the newspaper? I can't find "The Times" newspaper.

LADY FRANKLIN.

I think it is in my room. Shall I fetch it?

SIR JOHN.

My dear sister—you're the best creature. Do!

[*Exit* LADY FRANKLIN.

Ugh! you unnatural conspirator against your own family! What can this *letter* be? Ah! I recollect something.

Enter GEORGINA.

GEORGINA.

Papa, I want——

SIR JOHN.

Yes, I know what you want well enough! Tell me—were you aware that Clara had sent money to that old nurse Evelyn bored us about the day of the will?

GEORGINA.

No! He gave me the address, and I promised, if——

SIR JOHN.

Gave you *the address?*—that's lucky! Hush!

Enter SERVANT.

Mr. Graves—Mr. Evelyn!

SCENE V.

GRAVES, EVELYN, SIR JOHN, GEORGINA, LADY FRANKLIN.

LADY FRANKLIN (*returning*).

Here is the newspaper.

GRAVES.

Ay—read the newspapers!—they'll tell you what this world is made of. Daily calendars of roguery and woe! Here, advertisements from quacks, money-lenders, cheap warehouses, and spotted boys with two heads. So much for dupes and impostors! Turn to the other column—police reports, bankruptcies, swindling, forgery, and a biographical sketch of the snub-nosed man who murdered his own three little cherubs at Pentonville. Do you fancy these but exceptions to the *general* virtue and health of the nation?—

Turn to the leading articles; and your hair will stand on end at the horrible wickedness or melancholy idiotism of that half the population who think differently from yourself. In my day I have seen already eighteen crises, six annihilations of Agriculture and Commerce, four overthrows of the Church, and three last, final, awful, and irremediable destructions of the entire Constitution. And that's a newspaper!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! your usual vein! always so amusing and good-humoured!

GRAVES (*frowning and very angry*).

Ma'am—good-humoured!——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ah! you should always wear that agreeable smile; you look so much younger—so much handsomer—when you smile!

GRAVES (*softened*).

Ma'am——A charming creature, upon my word!

LADY FRANKLIN.

You have not seen the last HB.? It is excellent. I think it might make you *laugh*. But, by the bye, I don't think you can laugh.

GRAVES.

Ma'am—I have not laughed since the death of my sainted Ma——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ah! and that spiteful Sir Frederick says you never laugh, because—— But you'll be angry?

GRAVES.

Angry!—pooh! I despise Sir Frederick too much to let anything he says have the smallest influence over me! He says I don't laugh, because——

LADY FRANKLIN.

You have lost your front teeth!

GRAVES.

Lost my front teeth! Upon my word! Ha! ha! ha! That's too good—capital! Ha! ha!

[*Laughing from ear to ear.*

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! ha!

[*They retire to the table in the inner drawing-room.*

EVELYN (*aside*).

Of course Clara will not appear!—avoids me as usual!

But what do I care?—what is she to me? Nothing! I'll swear this is her glove!—no one else has so small a hand. She'll miss it—so—so! Nobody's looking—I'll keep it, just to vex her.

SIR JOHN (*to* GEORGINA).

Yes—yes—leave me to manage: you took his portrait, as I told you?

GEORGINA.

Yes—but I could not catch the expression. I got Clara to touch it up.

SIR JOHN.

That girl's always in the way!

Enter CAPTAIN DUDLEY SMOOTH.

SMOOTH.

Good morning, dear John. Ah, Miss Vesey, you have no idea of the conquests you made at Almack's last night!

EVELYN (*examining him curiously while* SMOOTH *is talking to* GEORGINA).

And that's the celebrated Dudley Smooth!

SIR JOHN.

More commonly called Deadly Smooth!—the finest player at whist, écarté, billiards, chess, and picquet, between this and the Pyramids;—the sweetest manners!—always calls you by your Christian name. But take care how you play at cards with him!

EVELYN.

He does not cheat, I suppose?

SIR JOHN.

Hist! *No!*—but he always *wins!* Eats up a brace of lords and a score or two of guardsmen every season, and runs through a man's fortune like a course of the Carlsbad waters. He's an uncommonly clever fellow!

EVELYN.

Clever? yes! When a man steals a loaf we cry down the knavery—when a man diverts his neighbour's mill-stream to grind his own corn, we cry up the cleverness!—And every one courts Captain Dudley Smooth!

SIR JOHN.

Why, who could offend him?—the best bred, civillest creature—and a dead shot! There is not a cleverer man in the three kingdoms.

EVELYN.

A study—a study!—let me examine him! Such men are living satires on the world.

SMOOTH (*passing his arm caressingly over* SIR JOHN'S *shoulder*).

My dear John, how well you are looking! A new lease of life! Introduce me to Mr. Evelyn.

EVELYN.

Sir, it's an honour I've long ardently desired.

[*They bow and shake hands.*

Enter SIR FREDERICK BLOUNT.

BLOUNT.

How d'ye do, Sir John? Ah, Evelyn!—I wished so much to see you.

EVELYN.

'Tis my misfortune to be visible!

BLOUNT.

A little this way. You know, pewhaps, that I once paid my addwesses to Miss Vesey; but since that vewy eccentwic will Sir John has shuffled me off, and hints at a pwior attachment—(*aside*) which I know to be false.

EVELYN (*seeing* CLARA).

A prior attachment!—(Ha! Clara!) Well, another time, my dear Blount.

Enter CLARA.

BLOUNT.

Stay a moment—I want you to do me a favour with regard to Miss Douglas.

EVELYN.

Miss Douglas!

BLOUNT.

Yes;—you see, though Georgina has gweat expectations, and Stingy Jack will leave her all that he has, yet she has only her legacy of 10,000*l.* at the moment—no doubt closely settled on herself too: Clawa has 20,000*l.* And, I think, Clawa always liked me a little.

EVELYN.

You! I dare say she did!

BLOUNT.

It is whispered about that you mean to pwopose to Georgina. Nay, Sir John more than hinted that was her pwior attachment!

EVELYN.

Indeed!

BLOUNT.

Now, as you are all in all with the family, if you could say a word for me to Miss Douglas, I don't see what harm it could do me!—(*Aside*) I will punish Georgina for her pwerfidy.

EVELYN.

'Sdeath, man! speak for yourself! you are just the sort of man for young ladies to like—they understand you—you're of their own level. Pshaw! you're too modest—you want no mediator!

BLOUNT.

My dear fellow, you flatter me. I'm well enough in my way. But you, you know, would cawwy evewything before you!—you're so confoundedly wich!

EVELYN (*turning to* CLARA).

Miss Douglas, what do you think of Sir Frederick Blount? Observe him. He is well-dressed—young—tolerably handsome—(BLOUNT *bowing*) bows with an air—has plenty of small-talk—every thing to captivate. Yet he thinks that, if he and I were suitors to the same lady, I should be more successful because I am richer. What say you? Is love an auction?—and *do* women's hearts go to the highest bidder?

CLARA.

Their hearts?—No.

EVELYN.

But their hands—yes! You turn away. Ah, you dare not answer that question!

GEORGINA (*aside*).

Sir Frederick flirting with Clara? I'll punish him for his perfidy. *You* are the last person to talk so, Mr. Evelyn!—you, whose wealth is your smallest attraction—you, whom every one admires—so witty, such taste, such talent! Ah, I'm very foolish!

SIR JOHN (*clapping him on the shoulder*).

You must not turn my little girl's head. Oh, you're a sad fellow! Apropos, I must show you Georgina's last drawings. She has wonderfully improved since you gave her lessons in perspective.

GEORGINA.

No, papa!—No! pray, no! Nay, don't!

SIR JOHN.

Nonsense, child!—It's very odd, but she's more afraid of you than of any one!

SMOOTH (*to* BLOUNT *taking snuff*).

He's an excellent father, our dear John! and supplies the place of a mother to her.

[*Turns away to* LADY FRANKLIN *and* GRAVES.

[EVELYN *and* GEORGINA *seat themselves, and look over the drawings;* SIR JOHN *leans over them;* SIR FREDERICK *converses with* CLARA; EVELYN *watching them.*

EVELYN.

Beautiful!—a view from Tivoli. (Death!—she looks down while he speaks to her!) Is there not a little fault in that colouring? (She positively blushes!) But this Jupiter is superb. (What a d——d coxcomb it is!) (*Rising.*) Oh, she certainly loves him—I too can be loved elsewhere—I too can see smiles and blushes on the face of another!

GEORGINA.

Are you not well?

EVELYN.

I beg pardon. Yes, you are indeed improved! Ah, who so accomplished as Miss Vesey?

[*Takes up the drawings; pays her marked attention in dumb show.*

CLARA.

Yes, Sir Frederick, the concert was very crowded!—Ah, I see that Georgina consoles him for the past! He has only praises for her, nothing but taunts for me!

BLOUNT.

I wish you would take my opewa-box next Saturday—'tis the best in the house. I'm not wich, but I spend what I have on myself! I make a point to have evewything the best in a quiet way. Best opewa-box—best dogs—best horses—best house of its kind. I want nothing to complete my establishment but the best wife!

CLARA (*abstractedly*).

That will come in good time, Sir Frederick.

EVELYN.

Oh, it will come—will it? Georgina refused the trifler—*she* courts him. (*Taking up a portrait*) Why, what is this?—my own——

GEORGINA.

You must not look at that—you must not, indeed. I did not know it was there!

SIR JOHN.

Your own portrait, Evelyn. Why, child! I was not aware

you took likenesses :—that's something new. Upon my word it's a strong resemblance.

GEORGINA.

Oh, no—it does not do him justice. Give it to me. I will tear it. (*Aside*) That odious Sir Frederick!

EVELYN.

Nay, you shall not.

CLARA.

So—so—he loves her, then! Misery—misery! But he shall not perceive it! No—no—I can be proud too. Ha! ha!—Sir Frederick—excellent—excellent—you are so entertaining—ha! ha! [*Laughs hysterically.*

EVELYN.

Oh, the affectation of coquets!—they cannot even laugh naturally!

[CLARA *looks at him reproachfully, and walks aside with* SIR FREDERICK.

But where is the new guitar you meant to buy, Miss Vesey—the one inlaid with tortoiseshell? It is nearly a year since you set your heart on it, and I don't see it yet!

SIR JOHN (*taking him aside confidentially*).

The guitar!—oh, to tell you a secret—she applied the money I gave her for it to a case of charity several months ago—the very day the will was read. I saw the letter lying on the table, with the money in it. Mind, not a word to her—she'd never forgive me!

EVELYN.

Letter!—money! What was the name of the person she relieved?—not Stanton!

SIR JOHN.

I don't remember, indeed.

EVELYN (*taking out the letter*).

This is not her hand!

SIR JOHN.

No! I observed at the time it was not her hand, but I got out from her that she did not wish the thing to be *known*, and had employed some one else to copy it. May I see the letter? Yes, I think this is the wording. But I did not mean to tell you what case of charity it was. I promised Georgy I would not. Still, how did she know Mrs. Stanton's address?—you never gave it to me!

EVELYN.

I gave it to her, Sir John.

CLARA (*at the distance*).

Yes, I'll go to the opera, if Lady Franklin will. Do go, dear Lady Franklin!—On Saturday, then, Sir Frederick.

[*Exit* BLOUNT.

EVELYN.

Sir John, to a man like me, this simple act of unostentatious generosity is worth all the accomplishments in the world. A good heart—a tender disposition—a charity that shuns the day—a modesty that blushes at its own excellence—an impulse towards something more divine than Mammon;—such are the true accomplishments which preserve beauty for ever young. Such I have sought in the partner I would take for life;—such have I found—alas! not where I had dreamed!—Miss Vesey, I will be honest—I say, then, frankly—(*as* CLARA *approaches, raising his voice and looking fixedly at her*)—I have loved another—deeply—truly—bitterly—*vainly!* I cannot offer to you, as I did to her, the fair first love of the human heart—rich with all its blossoms and its verdure. But if esteem—if gratitude—if an earnest resolve to conquer every recollection that would wander from your image;—if these can tempt you to accept my hand and fortune, my life shall be a study to deserve your confidence.

[CLARA *stands motionless, clasping her hands, and then slowly seats herself.*

SIR JOHN.

The happiest day of my life.

[CLARA *falls back in her chair.*

EVELYN (*darting forward*).

(*Aside*) She is pale; she faints! What have I done? Oh, Heaven!—Clara!

CLARA (*rising with a smile*).

Be happy, my cousin—be happy! Yes, with my whole heart I say it—be happy, Alfred Evelyn!

Clara sinks into a chair L.C

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The drawing-rooms in SIR JOHN VESEY'S *house.*
SIR JOHN, GEORGINA.

SIR JOHN.

And he has not pressed you to fix the wedding-day?

GEORGINA.

No; and since he proposed he comes here so seldom, and seems so gloomy. Heigho! Poor Sir Frederick was twenty times more amusing.

SIR JOHN.

But Evelyn is fifty times as rich!

GEORGINA.

Sir Frederick dresses so well!

SIR JOHN.

You'll have magnificent diamonds! But a word with you: I saw you yesterday in the square with Sir Frederick; that must not happen again. When a young lady is engaged to one man, nothing is so indecorous as to flirt with another. It might endanger your marriage itself. Oh, it's highly indecorous!

GEORGINA.

Don't be afraid, papa,—he takes up with Clara.

SIR JOHN.

Who? Evelyn?

GEORGINA.

Sir Frederick. Heigho!—I hate artful girls.

SIR JOHN.

The settlements will be splendid! if anything happens, nothing can be handsomer than your jointure.

GEORGINA.

My own kind papa, you always put things so pleasantly. But do you not fear lest he discover that Clara wrote the letter?

SIR JOHN.

No; and I shall get Clara out of the house. But there

is something else that makes me very uneasy. You know, that no sooner did Evelyn come into possession of his fortune than he launched out in the style of a prince. His house in London is a palace, and he has bought a great estate in the country. Look how he lives!—Balls—banquets—fine arts—fiddlers—charities—and the devil to pay!

GEORGINA.

But if he can afford it——

SIR JOHN.

Oh! so long as he stopped *there* I had no apprehension; but since he proposed for you he is more extravagant than ever. They say he has taken to gambling: and he is always with Captain Smooth. No fortune can stand Deadly Smooth! If he gets into a scrape, he may fall off from the settlements. We must press the marriage at once.

GEORGINA.

Heigho! Poor Frederick! You don't think he is *really* attached to Clara?

SIR JOHN.

Upon my word I can't say. Put on your bonnet, and come to Storr and Mortimer's to choose the jewels.

GEORGINA.

The jewels!—yes—the drive will do me good. So you'll send away Clara?—she's so very deceitful.

SIR JOHN.

Never fear—yes—tell her to come to me.

[*Exit* GEORGINA.

Yes; I must press on this marriage. Georgina has not wit enough to manage him—at least till he's her husband, and then all women find it smooth sailing. This match will make me a man of prodigious importance! I suspect he'll give me up her ten thousand pounds. I can't think of his taking to gambling, for I love him as a son—and I look on his money as my own.

~~SCENE II.~~

Enter CLARA, ~~Sir John.~~ 12, 14

SIR JOHN.

Clara, my love!

CLARA.

Sir——

SIR JOHN.

My dear, what I am going to say may appear a little rude and unkind, but you know my character is frankness.—To the point, then: my poor child, I am aware of your attachment to Mr. Evelyn——

CLARA.

—— Sir! *my attachment?*

SIR JOHN.

It is generally remarked. Lady Kind says you are falling away. My poor girl, I pity you—I do, indeed! Now there's that letter you wrote to his old nurse—it has got about somehow—and the world is so ill-natured. I don't know if I did right; but after he had proposed to Georgy —(of course, not before!)—I thought it so unpleasant for you, as a young lady, to be suspected of anything forward with respect to a man who was not attached to you, that I rather let it be supposed that Georgy *herself* wrote the letter.

CLARA.

—— Sir, I don't know what right you had to——

SIR JOHN.

That's very true, my dear; and I've been thinking since that I ought perhaps to tell Mr. Evelyn that the letter was yours—shall I?

CLARA.

—— No, Sir; I beg you will not. I—I—— [*Weeps.*

SIR JOHN.

My dear Clara, don't cry; I would not have said this for the world, if I was not a little anxious about my own girl. Georgina is so unhappy at what every one says of your attachment——

CLARA.

—— Every one?—Oh, torture!

SIR JOHN.

That it preys on her spirits—it even irritates her temper! You see, though the marriage will take place almost immediately, Mr. Evelyn does not come so often as he ought. In a word, I fear these little jealousies and suspicions will tend to embitter their future union.—I'm a father—forgive me.

CLARA.

—— Embitter their union! Oh, never! What would you have me do, sir?

SIR JOHN.

Why, you're now independent. Lady Franklin seems

resolved to stay in town. Surely she can't mean to take her money out of the family by some foolish inclination for Mr. Graves? He is always purring and whining about the house, like a black cat in the megrims. What think you, eh?

CLARA.

Sir, it was of myself—my unhappy self—you were speaking.

SIR JOHN.

Sly!——True; true! What I meant to say was this:—Lady Franklin persists in staying *here*: you are your own mistress. Mrs. Carlton, aunt to my late wife, is going abroad for a short time, and would be delighted if you would accompany her.

CLARA.

It is the very favour I would have asked of you. (*Aside*) I shall escape at least the struggle and the shame. When does she go?

SIR JOHN.

In five days—next Monday.—You forgive me?

CLARA.

Sir, I thank you.

SIR JOHN (*drawing the table*).

Suppose, then, you write a line to her yourself, and settle it at once?

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

The carriage, Sir John; Miss Vesey is quite ready.

SIR JOHN.

Wait a moment. Shall I tell Evelyn you wrote the letter?

CLARA.

No, sir, I implore you.

SIR JOHN.

But it would be awkward for Georgy, if discovered.

CLARA.

It *never* shall be.

SIR JOHN.

Well, well, as you please. I know nothing could be so painful to a young lady of pride and delicacy.——James, if Mr. Serious, the clergyman, calls, say I am gone to the great meeting at Exeter Hall: if Lord Spruce calls, say you believe I'm gone to the rehearsal of Cinderella. Oh! and if MacFinch should come—(MacFinch, who duns me three times a-week)—say I've hurried off to Garraway's to bid

for the great Bulstrode estate. Just put the Duke of Lofty's card carelessly on the hall table. And I say, James, I expect two gentlemen a little before dinner—Mr. Squab the Radical, and Mr. Qualm of the great Marylebone Conservative Association. Show Squab into the study, and be sure to give him the "Weekly True Sun,"—Qualm into the back parlour, with the "Times" and the "Morning Post." One must have a little management in this world. All humbug!—all humbug upon my soul! [*Exit.*

CLARA (*folding the letter*).

There—it is decided! A few days and we are parted for ever!—a few weeks, and another will bear his name—his wife! Oh, happy fate! She will have the right to say to him—though the whole world should hear her—"I am thine!" And I embitter their lot—I am the cloud upon their joyous sunshine! And yet, O Alfred! if she loves thee—if she knows thee—if she values thee—and, when thou wrong'st her, if she can forgive as I do—I can bless her, when far away, and join her name in my prayer for thee!

EVELYN (*without*).

Miss Vesey just gone? Well, I will write a line.

EVELYN, CLARA.

EVELYN.

(*Aside*) So—Clara! Do not let me disturb you, Miss Douglas.

CLARA (*going*).

Nay, I have done.

EVELYN.

I see that my presence is always odious to you. It is a reason why I come so seldom. But be cheered, madam: I am here but to fix the day of my marriage, and I shall then go into the country—till—till—— In short, this is the last time my visit will banish you from the room I enter.

CLARA (*aside*).

The last time!—and we shall then meet no more!—And to part thus for ever—in scorn—in anger—I cannot bear it! (*Approaching him*) Alfred, my cousin, it is true, this may be the last time we shall meet—I have made my arrangements to quit England.

EVELYN.

To quit England?

CLARA.

But, before I go, let me thank you for many a past kindness, which it is not for an orphan easily to forget.

EVELYN (*mechanically*).

To quit England!

CLARA.

I have long wished it: but enough of me.——Evelyn, now that you are betrothed to another—now, without recurring to the past—now, without the fear of mutual error and mistake—something of our old friendship may at least return to us.——And if, too, I dared, I have that on my mind which only a friend—a sister—might presume to say to you.

EVELYN (*moved*).

Miss Douglas—Clara—if there is aught that I could do—if, while hundreds—strangers—beggars—tell me that I have the power, by opening or shutting this worthless hand, to bid sorrow rejoice, or poverty despair—if—if my life—my heart's blood—could render to *you* one such service as my gold can give to others—why, speak!—and the past you allude to,—yes, even that bitter past,—I will cancel and forget!

CLARA (*holding out her hand*).

We are friends, then! you are again my cousin! my brother!

EVELYN (*dropping her hand*).

Brother! Ah! say on!

CLARA.

I speak, then, as a sister—herself weak, inexperienced, ignorant, nothing—*might* speak to a brother, in whose career she felt the ambition of a man. Oh, Evelyn! when you inherited this vast wealth I pleased myself with imagining how you would wield the power delegated to your hands. I knew your benevolence—your intellect—your genius!—the ardent mind couched beneath the cold sarcasm of a long-baffled spirit! I saw before me the noble and bright career open to you at last—and I often thought that, in after years, when far away—as I soon shall be—I should hear your name identified, not with what fortune can give the base, but with deeds and ends to which, for the *great*, fortune is but the instrument;—I often thought that I should say to my own heart—weeping proud and delicious tears—"And once this man loved me!"

EVELYN.

No more, Clara!—oh, Heavens!—no more!

CLARA.

But *has* it been so?—have you been true to your own self?——Pomp—parade—luxuries—pleasures—follies!—all these might distinguish others—they do but belie the ambition and the soul of Alfred Evelyn!——Oh! pardon me—I am too bold—I pain—I offend you.——Ah, I should not have dared thus much had I not thought, at times, that—that——

EVELYN.

That these follies—these vanities—this dalliance with a loftier fate—were your own work! You thought that, and you were right! Perhaps, indeed, after a youth steeped to the lips in the hyssop and gall of penury—perhaps I might have wished royally to know the full value of that dazzling and starry life which, from the last step in the ladder, I had seen indignantly and from afar. But a month—a week—would have sufficed for that experience. Experience!—Oh, how soon we learn that hearts are as cold and souls as vile—no matter whether the sun shine on the noble in his palace, or the rain drench the rags of the beggar cowering at the porch. The extremes of life differ but in this:—Above, *Vice* smiles and revels; below, *Crime* frowns and starves. But you—did not you reject me because I was poor? Despise me, if you please!—my revenge might be unworthy—I wished to show you the luxuries, the gaud, the splendour I thought you prized,—to surround with the attributes your sex seems most to value the station that, had you loved me, it would have been yours to command. But vain—vain alike my poverty and my wealth! You loved me not in either, and my fate is sealed!

CLARA.

A happy fate, Evelyn!—you love!

EVELYN.

And at last I am beloved. (*After a pause, and turning to her abruptly*) Do you doubt it?

CLARA.

No, I believe it firmly!—(*Aside*) Were it possible for her not to love him?

EVELYN.

Georgina, perhaps, is vain—and light—and——

CLARA.

No—think it not! Once removed from the worldly

atmosphere of her father's counsels, and you will form and raise her to your own level. She is so young yet—she has beauty, cheerfulness, and temper;—the rest you will give, if you will but yet do justice to your own nature. And, now that there is nothing unkind between us—not even regret—and surely (*with a smile*) not revenge, my cousin—you will rise to your nobler self—and so, farewell!

EVELYN.

No; stay—one moment;—you still feel interested in my fate! Have I been deceived? Oh, why—why did you spurn the heart whose offerings were lavished at your feet? Could you still—still——? Distraction!—I know not what I say:—my honour pledged to another—my vows accepted and returned! Go, Clara; it is best so! Yet you will miss some one, perhaps, more than me—some one to whose follies you have been more indulgent—some one to whom you would permit a yet tenderer name than that of brother!

CLARA (*aside*).

It will make him, perhaps, happier to think it! Think so, if you will!—but part friends.

EVELYN.

Friends!—and that is all! Look you, this is life! The eyes that charmed away every sorrow—the hand whose lightest touch thrilled to the very core—the presence that, like moonlight, shed its own hallowing beauty over the meanest things;—a little while—a year—a month—a day, and we smile that we could dream so idly. All—all—the sweet enchantment, known but once, never to return again, vanished from the world! And the one who forgets the soonest—the one who robs your earth for ever of its summer—comes to you with a careless lip, and says—"Let us part friends!"——Go, Clara,—go,—and be happy if you can!

CLARA (*weeping*).

Cruel—cruel—to the last!——Heaven forgive you, Alfred! [*Exit.*

EVELYN.

Soft!—let me recall her words, her tones, her looks. —*Does she love me?*—She defends her rival—she did not deny it when I charged her with attachment to another; and yet—and yet there is a voice at my heart which tells me I have been the rash slave of a jealous anger. ——But I have made my choice—I must abide the issue!

Enter GRAVES, *preceded by* Servant.

SERVANT.

Lady Franklin is dressing, sir.

SCENE IV.

GRAVES, EVELYN.

GRAVES.

Well, I'll wait. (*Exit* Servant.) She was worthy to have known the lost Maria! So considerate to ask me hither—not to console me, *that* is impossible—but to indulge the luxury of woe. It will be a mournful scene.——(*Seeing* EVELYN.) Is that you, Evelyn?—I have just heard that the borough of Groginhole is vacant at last. Why not stand yourself?—with your property you might come in without even a personal canvass.

EVELYN.

I, who despise these contests for the colour of a straw—this everlasting litigation of Authority *versus* Man—I to be one of the wranglers?—never!

GRAVES.

You are quite right, and I beg your pardon.

EVELYN.

(*Aside*) And yet Clara spoke of ambition. She would regret me if I could be distinguished.——(*Aloud*) To be sure, after all, Graves, corrupt as mankind are, it is our duty to try at least to make them a little better. An Englishman owes something to his country.

GRAVES.

He does, indeed! (*counting on his fingers.*) East Winds, Fogs, Rheumatism, Pulmonary Complaints, and Taxes—(EVELYN *walks about in disorder.*) You seem agitated—a quarrel with your intended? Oh! when you've been married a month, you'll not know what to do without one!

EVELYN.

You are a pleasant comforter.

GRAVES.

Do you deserve a comforter? One morning you tell me you love Clara, or at least detest her, which is the same thing—(poor Maria often said she detested *me*)—and that very afternoon you propose to Georgina!

EVELYN.

Clara will easily console herself—thanks to Sir Frederick!

GRAVES.

He is young!

EVELYN.

Good-looking!

GRAVES.

A coxcomb!

EVELYN.

And therefore irresistible!

GRAVES.

Nevertheless, Clara has had the bad taste to refuse him. I have it from Lady Franklin, to whom he confided his despair in re-arranging his neckcloth.

EVELYN.

My dear friend—is it possible?

GRAVES.

But what then? You *must* marry Georgina, who, to believe Lady Franklin, is sincerely attached to—your fortune. Go and hang yourself, Evelyn; you have been duped by them.

EVELYN.

By them!—bah! If deceived, I have been my own dupe. Is it not a strange thing that in matters of reason—of the arithmetic and logic of life—we are sensible, shrewd, prudent men? But touch our hearts—move our passions—take us for an instant from the hard safety of worldly calculation—and the philosopher is duller than the fool! *Duped!*—if I thought it!

GRAVES.

To be sure!—you tried Clara in your *poverty;* it was a safe experiment to try Georgina in your *wealth.*

EVELYN.

Ha! that is true—very true. Go on.

GRAVES.

You'll have an excellent father-in-law. Sir John positively weeps when he talks of your income!

EVELYN.

Sir John, possibly—but Georgina?

GRAVES.

Plays affection to you in the afternoon, after practising first with Sir Frederick in the morning.

EVELYN.

On your life, sir, be serious: what do you mean?

GRAVES.

That in passing this way I see her very often walking in the square with Sir Frederick.

EVELYN.

Ha! say you so?

GRAVES.

What then? Man is born to be deceived. You look nervous—your hand trembles; that comes of gaming. They say at the clubs that you play deeply.

EVELYN.

Ha! ha! Do they say that?—a few hundreds lost or won—a cheap opiate—anything that can lay the memory to sleep. The poor man drinks, and the rich man gambles—the same motive to both! But you are right—it is a base resource—I will play no more.

GRAVES.

I am delighted to hear it, for your friend Captain Smooth has ruined half the young heirs in London. To play with him is to advertise yourself a bankrupt. Even Sir John is alarmed. I met him just now in Pall Mall; he made me stop, and implored me to speak to you. By the by, I forgot—do you bank with Flash, Brisk, Credit, and Co.?

EVELYN.

So, Sir John is alarmed?—(*Aside*) Gulled by this cogging charlatan?—Aha! I may beat him yet at his own weapons!——Humph! Bank with Flash! Why do you ask me?

GRAVES.

Because Sir John has just heard that they are in a very bad way, and begs you to withdraw anything you have in their hands.

EVELYN.

I'll see to it. So, Sir John is *alarmed* at my gambling?

GRAVES.

Terribly! He even told me he should go himself to the club, this evening, to watch you.

EVELYN.

To watch me!—good—I will be there.

GRAVES.

But you will promise not to play?

EVELYN.

Yes—to play. I feel it is impossible to give it up!

GRAVES.

No—no! 'Sdeath, man! be as wretched as you please: break your heart, that's nothing! but damme, take care of your pockets!

EVELYN.

I will be there—I will play with Captain Smooth—I will lose as much as I please—thousands—millions—billions; and if he presume to spy on my losses, hang me if I don't lose Sir John himself into the bargain! (*Going out and returning.*) I am so absent! What was the bank you mentioned? Flash, Brisk, and Credit? Bless me, how unlucky! and it's too late to draw out to-day. Tell Sir John I'm very much obliged to him, and he'll find me at the club any time before day-break hard at work with my friend Smooth! [*Exit.*

GRAVES.

He's certainly crazy! but I don't wonder at it. What the approach of the dog-days is to the canine species, the approach of the honeymoon is to the human race.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Lady Franklin's compliments—she will see you in the *boudoir*, sir.

GRAVES.

In the *boudoir!*—go, go—I'll come directly.

[*Exit* Servant.

My heart beats—it must be for grief. Poor Maria! (*Searching his pockets for his handkerchief.*) Not a white one!—just like my luck: I call on a lady to talk of the dear departed, and I've nothing about me but a cursed gaudy, flaunting, red, yellow, and blue abomination from India, which it's even indecent for a disconsolate widower to exhibit. Ah! Fortune never ceases to torment the susceptible. The *boudoir!*—ha! ha! the *boudoir!* [*Exit.*

SCENE 2d

A Boudoir in the same house.

LADY FRANKLIN.

I take so much compassion on this poor man, who is determined to make himself wretched, that I am equally determined to make him happy! Well if my scheme does

but succeed, he shall laugh, he shall sing, he shall—Mum! —here he comes!

Enter GRAVES.

GRAVES (*sighing*).

Ah, Lady Franklin!

LADY FRANKLIN (*sighing*).

Ah, Mr. Graves! (*They seat themselves.*) Pray excuse me for having kept you so long. Is it not a charming day?

GRAVES.

An east wind, ma'am! But nothing comes amiss to you! —it's a happy disposition! Poor Maria!—*she*, too, was naturally gay.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Yes, she was gay. So much life, and a great deal of spirit.

GRAVES.

Spirit? Yes!—nothing could master it. She *would* have her own way! Ah! there was nobody like her!

LADY FRANKLIN.

And then, when her spirit was up, she looked so handsome! Her eyes grew so brilliant!

GRAVES.

Did not they?—Ah! ah! ha! ha! ha! And do you remember her pretty trick of stamping her foot?—the tiniest little foot—I think I see her now. Ah! this conversation is very soothing.

LADY FRANKLIN.

How well she acted in your private theatricals!

GRAVES.

You remember her Mrs. Oakley, in "The Jealous Wife?" Ha! ha! how good it was!—ha! ha!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! Yes, in the very first scene, when she came out with (*mimicking*) "Your unkindness and barbarity will be the death of me!"

GRAVES.

No—no! that's not it! more energy. (*Mimicking*) "Your unkindness and barbarity will be the DEATH of me." Ha! ha! I ought to know how she said it, for she used to practise it on me twice a-day. Ah! poor dear lamb! (*Wipes his eyes.*)

LADY FRANKLIN.

And then she sang so well! was such a composer! What was that little French air she was so fond of?

GRAVES.

Ha! ha! sprightly! was it not? Let me see—let me see.

LADY FRANKLIN (*humming*).

Tum ti—ti tum—ti—ti—ti. No, that's not it.

GRAVES (*humming*).

Tum ti—ti—tum ti—ti—tum—tum—tum.

BOTH.

Tum ti—ti—tum ti—ti—tum—tum—tum. Ha! ha!

GRAVES (*throwing himself back*).

Ah! what recollections it revives! It is too affecting.

LADY FRANKLIN.

It *is* affecting; but we are all mortal. (*Sighs.*) And at your Christmas party, at Cyprus Lodge, do you remember her dancing the Scotch reel with Captain Macnaughten?

GRAVES.

Ha! ha! ha! To be sure—to be sure.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Can you think of the step?—somehow thus, was it not?

[*Dancing.*

GRAVES.

No—no—quite wrong!—just stand there. Now then (*humming the tune*)—La—la-la-la—La la, &c.

[*They dance.*

That's it!—excellent!—admirable!

LADY FRANKLIN (*aside*).

Now, it's coming.

Enter SIR JOHN, BLOUNT, GEORGINA—*they stand amazed.* LADY FRANKLIN *continues to dance.*

GRAVES.

Bewitching!—irresistible! It's Maria herself that I see before me! Thus—thus—let me clasp——Oh, the devil! Just like my luck!—(*Stopping opposite* SIR JOHN.)

[LADY FRANKLIN *runs off.*

SIR JOHN.

Upon *my* word, Mr. Graves!

GEORGINA, BLOUNT.

Encore—encore! Bravo—bravo!

GRAVES.

It's all a mistake! I—I—Sir John.—Lady Franklin, you see—that is to say—I——Sainted Maria! you are spared, at least, this affliction!

GEORGINA.

Pray go on!

BLOUNT.

Don't let us interwupt you.

GRAVES.

Interrupt me! I must say that this rudeness—this gross impropriety—to pry into the sorrows of a poor bereaved sufferer, seeking comfort from a sympathising friend—But such is human nature!

GEORGINA.

But, Mr. Graves!—(*following him*).

GRAVES.

Heartless.

BLOUNT.

My dear Mr. Graves—(*following him*).

GRAVES.

Frivolous!

SIR JOHN.

Stay and dine!—(*following him*).

GRAVES.

Unfeeling!

OMNES.

Ha!——ha!——ha!

GRAVES.

Monsters! Good day to you.*

[*Exit, followed by* SIR JOHN, *&c.*

SCENE 3d

*The interior of * * * *'s Club; night; lights, &c. Small sofa-tables, with books, papers, tea, coffee, &c. Several members grouped by the fireplace; one member with his legs over the back of his chair; another with his legs over his table; a third with his legs on the chimneypiece. To the left, and in front of the Stage, an old member reading the newspaper, seated by a small round table; to the right a card-table, before which* CAPTAIN DUDLEY SMOOTH *is seated, and sipping lemonade; at the bottom of the Stage another card-table.*

GLOSSMORE, STOUT.

GLOSSMORE.

You don't come often to the club, Stout?

* For the original idea of this scene the author is indebted to a little *proverbe*, never, he believes, acted in public.

STOUT.

No; time is money. An hour spent at a club is unproductive capital.

OLD MEMBER (*reading the newspaper*).

Waiter!—the snuff-box. [Waiter *brings it.*

GLOSSMORE.

So, Evelyn has taken to play? I see Deadly Smooth, "hushed in grim repose, awaits his evening prey." Deep work to-night, I suspect, for Smooth is drinking lemonade—keeps his head clear—monstrous clever dog!

Enter EVELYN; *salutes and shakes hands with different members in passing up the Stage.*

EVELYN.

How d'ye do, Glossmore? How are you, Stout?—*you* don't play, I think? Political Economy never plays at cards, eh?—never has time for anything more frivolous than Rents and Profits, Wages and Labour, High Prices, and Low—Corn-Laws, Poor-Laws, Tithes, Currency—Dot-and-go-one—Rates, Puzzles, Taxes, Riddles and Botheration! Smooth is the man. Aha! Smooth. Piquet, eh? You owe me my revenge!

[*Members touch each other significantly;* STOUT *walks away with the snuff-box;* Old Member *looks at him savagely.*

SMOOTH.

My dear Alfred, anything to oblige.

[*They seat themselves.*

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box.

[Waiter *takes it from* STOUT *and brings it back to* Old Member.

Enter BLOUNT.

BLOUNT.

So, so! Evelyn at it again,—eh, Glossmore?

GLOSSMORE.

Yes, Smooth sticks to him like a leech. Clever fellow, that Smooth!

BLOUNT.

Will you make up a wubber?

GLOSSMORE.

Have you got two others?

BLOUNT.

Yes; Flat and Green.

GLOSSMORE.

Bad players.

BLOUNT.

I make it a wule to play with bad players: it is five per cent. in one's favour. I hate gambling, but a quiet wubber, if one is the best player out of four, can't do one any harm.

GLOSSMORE.

Clever fellow, that Blount!

[BLOUNT *takes up the snuff-box and walks off with it;* Old Member *looks at him savagely.*

[BLOUNT, GLOSSMORE, FLAT, *and* GREEN, *make up a table at the bottom of the Stage.*

SMOOTH.

A thousand pardons, my dear Alfred,—ninety repique—ten cards!—game!

EVELYN (*passing a note to him*).

Game! Before we go on, one question. This is Thursday—how much do you calculate to win of me before Tuesday next?

SMOOTH.

Ce cher Alfred! He is so droll!

EVELYN (*writing in his pocket-book*).

Forty games a-night—four nights, minus Sunday—our usual stakes—that would be right, I think?

SMOOTH (*glancing over the account*).

Quite—if I win all—which is next to impossible.

EVELYN.

It shall be possible to win twice as much, on one condition. Can you keep a secret?

SMOOTH.

My dear Alfred, I have kept myself! I never inherited a farthing—I never spent less than 4000*l.* a-year—and I never told a soul how I managed it.

EVELYN.

Hark ye, then—a word with you—(*they whisper*).

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box.

[Waiter *takes it from* BLOUNT, *&c.*

Enter SIR JOHN.

EVELYN.

You understand?

SMOOTH.

Perfectly; anything to oblige.

EVELYN (*cutting*).

It is for you to deal. [*They go on playing.*

SIR JOHN (*groaning*).

There's my precious son-in-law, that is to be, spending *my* consequence, and making a fool of himself.

[*Takes up the snuff-box;* Old Member *looks at him savagely.*

BLOUNT.

I'm out. Flat, a poney on the odd twick. That's wight. —(*Coming up counting his money.*) Well, Sir John, you don't play?

SIR JOHN.

Play? no! Confound him—lost again!

EVELYN.

Hang the cards!—double the stakes!

SMOOTH.

Just as you please—done!

SIR JOHN.

Done, indeed!

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box. [Waiter *takes it from* SIR JOHN.

BLOUNT.

I've won eight points and the bets—I never lose—I never play in the Deadly Smooth set!

[*Takes up the snuff-box;* Old Member *as before.*

SIR JOHN (*looking over* SMOOTH'S *hand, and fidgeting backwards and forwards*).

Lord have mercy on us! Smooth has seven for his point! What's the stakes?

EVELYN.

Don't disturb us—I only throw out four. Stakes, Sir John?—immense? Was ever such luck?—not a card for my point. Do stand back, Sir John—I'm getting irritable.

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box. [Waiter *brings it back.*

BLOUNT.

One hundred pounds on the next game, Evelyn?

SIR JOHN.

Nonsense—nonsense—don't disturb him! All the fishes come to the bait! Sharks and minnows all nibbling away at my son-in-law!

EVELYN.

One hundred pounds, Blount? Ah! the finest gentleman

is never too fine a gentleman to pick up a guinea. Done! Treble the stakes, Smooth!

SIR JOHN.

I'm on the rack! (*seizing the snuff-box.*) Be cool, Evelyn! take care, my dear boy! Be cool—be cool.

EVELYN.

What—what? You have four queens!—five to the king. Confound the cards!—a fresh pack. (*Throws the cards behind him over* SIR JOHN.)

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box. [*Different members gather round.*

FIRST MEMBER.

I never before saw Evelyn out of temper. He must be losing immensely.

SECOND MEMBER.

Yes, this is interesting!

SIR JOHN.

Interesting! there's a wretch!

FIRST MEMBER.

Poor fellow! he'll be ruined in a month!

SIR JOHN.

I'm in a cold sweat.

SECOND MEMBER.

Smooth is the very devil.

SIR JOHN.

The devil's a joke to him!

GLOSSMORE (*slapping* SIR JOHN *on the back*).

A clever fellow that Smooth, Sir John, eh? (*Takes up the snuff-box.* Old Member *as before.*) 100*l.* on this game, Evelyn?

EVELYN (*half turning round*).

You! well done the Constitution! Yes, 100*l.*!

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box.

STOUT.

I *think* I'LL venture!—200*l.* on this game, Evelyn?

EVELYN (*quite turning round*).

Ha! ha! ha!—Enlightenment and the Constitution on the same side of the question at last! Oh, Stout, Stout!—greatest happiness of the greatest number—greatest number, number one! Done, Stout!—200*l.*!—ha! ha! ha!—Deal, Smooth. Well done, Political Economy!—ha! ha! ha!

SIR JOHN.

Quite hysterical—drivelling! Ar'nt you ashamed of yourselves? His own cousins—all in a conspiracy—a perfect gang of them. [*Members indignant.*

STOUT (*to* Members).

Hush! he's to marry Sir John's daughter.

FIRST MEMBER.

What, Stingy Jack's? oh!

CHORUS OF MEMBERS.

Oh! oh!

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box.

EVELYN (*rising in great agitation*).

No more, no more—I've done!—quite enough. Glossmore, Stout, Blount—I'll pay you to-morrow. I—I—Death!—this is ruinous!

[*Seizes the snuff-box;* Old Member *as before.*

SIR JOHN.

Ruinous? I dare say it is! What has he lost? what *has* he lost, Smooth? Not much? eh? eh?

[*Omnes gather round* SMOOTH.

SMOOTH.

Oh, a trifle, dear John!—excuse me! We never tell our winnings.—(*To* BLOUNT) How d'ye do, Fred?—(*To* GLOSSMORE) By the by, Charles, don't you want to sell your house in Grosvenor-square?—12,000*l.*, eh?

GLOSSMORE.

Yes, and the furniture at a valuation. About 3000*l.* more.

SMOOTH (*looking over his pocket-book*).

Um!—Well, we'll talk of it.

SIR JOHN.

12 and 3—15,000*l.* What a cold-blooded rascal it is!—15,000*l.*, Smooth?

SMOOTH.

Oh, the house itself is a trifle; but the establishment—I'm considering whether I have enough to keep it up, my dear John.

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter, the snuff-box! (*Scraping it round and with a wry face*)—And it's all gone! [*Gives it to the* Waiter *to fill.*

SIR JOHN (*turning round*).

And it's all gone!

EVELYN (*starting up and laughing hysterically*).

Ha! ha! all gone? not a bit of it. Smooth, this club is so noisy. Sir John, you are always in the way. Come to my house! come! Champagne and a broiled bone. Nothing venture, nothing have! The luck must turn, and by Jupiter we'll make a night of it!

SIR JOHN.

A night of it!!! For Heaven's sake, Evelyn! Evelyn!! —think what you are about!—think of Georgina's feelings! think of your poor lost mother!—think of the babes unborn! think of——

EVELYN.

I'll think of nothing! Zounds!—you don't know what I have lost, man; it's all your fault, distracting my attention! Pshaw—pshaw! Out of the way, do! Come, Smooth. Ha! ha! a night of it, my boy—a night of it!

[*Exeunt* SMOOTH *and* EVELYN.

SIR JOHN (*following*).

You must not, you shall not! Evelyn, my dear Evelyn! he's drunk—he's mad! Will no one send for the police?

MEMBERS.

Ha! ha! ha! Poor old Stingy Jack!

OLD MEMBER (*rising for the first time, and in a great rage*).

Waiter!—the snuff-box!

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Ante-room in EVELYN'S *house, as in Scene I. Act II.*
TABOURET, MACFINCH, FRANTZ, *and other tradesmen.*

TABOURET (*half whispers*).

So, I hear that Mr. Evelyn is turned gamester! There are strange reports about to-day—I don't know what to make of it! We must look sharp, Mr. Macfinch, we poor tradesmen, and make hay while the sun shines.

MACFINCH.

I wuish those geeming-houses were aw at the deevil!—It's a sheam and a sin for gentlemen to gang and ruin themselves, when we honest tradesmen could do it for them with sae muckle advantage to the hearts and commerce o' the country!

[*Omnes shake their heads approvingly.*

Enter SMOOTH *from the inner room, with a pocket-book and pencil in his hand.*

SMOOTH (*looking round*).

Hum! ha! Fine pictures!—(*Feeling the curtains.*) The new fashioned velvet, hum! good proportioned rooms! Yes, this house is better than Glossmore's! Oh, Mr. Tabouret, the upholsterer! you furnished these rooms? All of the best, eh?

TABOURET.

Oh, the VERY best! Mr. Evelyn is not a man to grudge expense, Sir!

SMOOTH.

He is not, indeed. You've been paid, I suppose, Tabouret?

TABOURET.

No, Sir, no—I never send in my bills when a customer is rich. (*Aside*) Bills are like trees, and grow by standing.

SMOOTH.

Humph! Not PAID? humph! [*Omnes gather round.*

MACFINCH.

I dinna like that hoomph, there's something vara suspeecious abun' it.

TABOURET (*to the tradesmen*).

It's the great card-player, Captain Smooth—finest player in Europe—cleaned out the Duke of Sillyvale. Uncommonly clever man!

SMOOTH (*pacing about the room*).

Thirty-six feet by twenty-eight—Um! I think a bow-window *there* would be an *improvement:* could it be done easily, Tabouret?

MACFINCH.

If Mr. Evelyn wants to pool about his house, there's no mon like my friend Mr. MacStucco.

SMOOTH.

Evelyn! I was speaking of *myself.* Mr. MacStucco?—humph!

TABOURET.

Yourself? Have you bought the house, sir?

SMOOTH.

Bought it?—hum!—ha!—it depends—So you've not been paid yet?—hum! Nor you—nor you—nor you?—Hum! ha!

TABOURET.

No, sir!—what *then?* No fear of Mr. EVELYN! Ha! ha!

OMNES (*anxiously*).

Ha! ha!—what then?

MACFINCH.

Ah, sir, what then? I'm a puir mon with a family; this way, Captain! You've a leetle account in the buiks; an' we'll e'en wipe it out altogether, gin you'll say what you mean by that Hoom! ha!

SMOOTH.

Macfinch, my dear fellow, don't oblige me to cane you; I would not have Mr. Evelyn distressed for the world. Poor fellow! he holds very bad cards. So you've not been paid yet? Don't send in your bills on any account—Mind! Yes; I don't dislike the house with some alteration. Good day to you—Hum! ha!

[*Exit, looking about him, examining the chairs, tables, &c.*

TABOURET.

Plain as a pikestaff!—staked his very house on an odd trick!

SCENE II.

The foregoing.—Enter SHARP *from the inner room, agitated, and in a hurry.*

SHARP.

O Lord! O Lord! who'd have thought it? Cards are the devil's books! John!—Thomas!—Harris!—(*ringing the bell.*)

Enter Two Servants.

Tom, take this letter to Sir John Vesey's. If not at home, find him—he will give you a cheque. Go to his banker's, and get it cashed *instantly*. Quick—quick! off with you!

TABOURET (*seizing* Servant).

What's the matter—what's the matter? How's Mr. Evelyn?

SERVANT.

Bad—very bad! Sate up all night with Captain Smooth! [*Runs off.*

SHARP (*to the other* Servant).

Yes, Harris, your poor master! O dear! O dear! You will take this note to the Belgian minister, Portland-place. Passport for Ostend! Have the travelling carriage ready at a moment's notice!

MACFINCH (*stopping* Servant).

Passport! Harkye, my mon; is he gaun to pit the saut seas between us and the siller?

SERVANT.

Don't stop me—something wrong in the chest—change of air—late hours—and Captain Smooth! [*Exit.*

SHARP (*walking about*).

And if the bank should break!—if the bank *is* broke, and he can't draw out! bound to Smooth.

TABOURET.

Bank!—what bank?

SHARP.

Flash's bank! Flash, brother-in-law to Captain Smooth! What have *you* heard?—eh?—eh?

TABOURET.

That there's an awful run on it!

SHARP.

I must be off. Go—go—you can't see Mr. Evelyn to-day.

TABOURET.

My account, Sir!

MACFINCH.

I've a muckle bairns and a sma' bill!

FRANTZ.

O Sare, de great gentlemen always tink first of de tailor!

SHARP.

Call again—call again at Christmas. The bank,—the cards,—the bank! O dear! O dear! [*Exit.*

TABOURET.

The bank!

MACFINCH.

The passport!

FRANTZ.

And all dat vill be seen of de great Evelyn coat is de back of it! *Donner und hagel!*—I vill arrest him—I vill put de salt on de tail of it!

TABOURET (*aside*).

I'll slip down to the city and see how the bank goes!

MACFINCH (*aside*).

I'll e'en gang to my coosin the la'yer. Nothing but peetience for us, Mr. Tabouret.

TABOURET.

Ay, ay,—stick by each other—share and share alike—that's my way, Sir.

OMNES.

Share and share alike. [*Exeunt.*

Act 4th ~~SCENE III.~~ Scene 1st

Enter Servant, GLOSSMORE, *and* BLOUNT.

SERVANT.

My master is not very well, my lord! but I'll let him know. [*Exit.*

GLOSSMORE.

I'm very curious to learn the result of his gambling tête-à-tête.

BLOUNT.

Oh, he's so howwidly wich, he can afford even a tête-à-tête with Deadly Smooth!

GLOSSMORE.

Poor old Stingy Jack! Why, Georgina was *your* intended.

BLOUNT.

Yes; and I weally liked the girl, though out of pique I pwoposed to her cousin. But what can a man do against money?

Enter EVELYN.

If we could start fair, you'd see whom Georgina would pwefer: but she's sacwificed by her father! She as much as told me so!

EVELYN.

So, so, gentlemen, we've a little account to settle—one hundred each.

BOTH.

Don't talk of it.

EVELYN (*putting up his pocket-book*).

Well, I'll not talk of it—(*Taking* BLOUNT *aside*) Ha! ha! you'd hardly believe it—but I'd rather not pay you just at present: my money is locked up, and I must wait, you know, for the Groginhole rents. So, instead of owing you one hundred pounds, suppose I owe you *five?* You can give me a cheque for the other four. And, harkye! not a word to Glossmore.

BLOUNT.

Glossmore! the gweatest gossip in London! I shall be delighted!—(*Aside*) It never does harm to lend to a wich man; one gets it back somehow. By the way, Evelyn, if you want my gwey cab-horse, you may have him for two hundwed pounds, and that will make seven.

EVELYN (*aside*).

That's the fashionable usury: your friend does not take interest—he sells you a horse.—(*Aloud*) Blount, it's a bargain.

BLOUNT (*writing the cheque, and musingly*).

No; I don't see what harm it can do me; that off leg must end in a spavin.

EVELYN (*to* GLOSSMORE).

That hundred pounds I owe you is rather inconvenient at present; I've a large sum to make up for the Groginhole property—perhaps you would lend me five or six hundred more—just to go on with?

GLOSSMORE.

Certainly! Hopkins is dead: your interest for Cipher would——

EVELYN.

Why, I can't promise *that* at this moment. But as a slight

mark of friendship and gratitude, I shall be very much flattered if you'll accept a splendid grey cab-horse I bought to-day—cost two hundred pounds!

GLOSSMORE.

Bought *to-day!*—then I'm safe. My dear fellow, you're always so princely!

EVELYN.

Nonsense! just write the cheque; and, harkye, not a syllable to Blount!

GLOSSMORE.

Blount! He's the town-crier! [*Goes to write.*

BLOUNT (*giving* EVELYN *the cheque*).

Wansom's, Pall-mall East.

EVELYN.

Thank you. So you *proposed* to Miss Douglas?

BLOUNT.

Hang it! yes; I could have sworn that she fancied me; her manner, for instance, that vewy day you pwoposed for Miss Vesey, otherwise Georgina——

EVELYN.

Has only half what Miss Douglas has.

BLOUNT.

You forget how much Stingy Jack must have saved! But I beg your pardon.

EVELYN.

Never mind; but not a word to Sir John, or he'll fancy I'm ruined.

GLOSSMORE (*giving the cheque*).

Ransom's, Pall-mall East. Tell me, did you win or lose last night?

EVELYN.

Win! lose! oh! No more of that, if you love me. I must send off at once to the banker's (*looking at the two cheques*).

GLOSSMORE (*aside*).

Why! he's borrowed from Blount, too!

BLOUNT (*aside*).

That's a cheque from Lord Glossmore!

EVELYN.

Excuse me; I must dress; I have not a moment to lose. You remember you dine with me to-day—seven o'clock. You'll meet Smooth. (*With tears in his voice.*) It may be

the last time I shall ever welcome you here! My —— what am I saying?—Oh, merely a joke! good by—*good* by.

[*Shaking them heartily by the hand. Exit by the inner room.*

BLOUNT.

Glossmore!

GLOSSMORE.

Blount!

BLOUNT.

I am afwaid all's not wight!

GLOSSMORE.

I incline to your opinion!

BLOUNT.

But I've sold my gwey cab-horse.

GLOSSMORE.

Grey cab-horse! you! What is he really worth now?

BLOUNT.

Since he is sold, I will tell you—Not a sixpence!

GLOSSMORE.

Not a sixpence? he gave it to me!

[EVELYN *at the door, giving directions to a* Servant *in dumb show.*

BLOUNT.

That was devilish unhandsome! Do you know, I feel nervous!

GLOSSMORE.

Nervous! Let us run and stop payment of our cheques.

[EVELYN *shuts the door, and* Servant *runs across the stage.*

BLOUNT.

Hollo, John! where so fast?

SERVANT (*in great haste*).

Beg pardon, Sir Frederick, to Pall-mall East—Messrs. Ransom. [*Exit.*

BLOUNT (*solemnly*).

Glossmore, we are fwoored?

GLOSSMORE.

Sir, the whole town shall know of it! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Enter TOKE *and other* Servants.

TOKE.

Come, come, stir yourselves! we've no time to lose. This room is to be got ready for the shawls. Mrs. Crump and the other ladies of the household are to wait here on the women before they go up to the drawing-room. Take away that desk! don't be lazy! and give me the newspaper.

[TOKE *seats himself; the* Servants *bustle about.*

Strange reports about my patron! and the valley is gone for the passport!

Enter FRANTZ *with a bundle.*

FRANTZ.

Mr. Toke, my goot Mr. Toke, I've brought you von leetel present.

TOKE.

John and Charles, vanish! [*Exeunt* Servants.

I scorn to corrupt them 'ere working classes!

FRANTZ (*producing a pair of small-clothes, which* TOKE *examines*).

Your master is von beggar! He vants to run avay; ve are all in de same vat-you-call-it—de same leetel nasty boat, Mr. Toke! Just let my friend Mr. Clutch up through the area. I vill put vat you call un execution on de gutes and de cattles dis very tay.

TOKE.

I accept the abridgments: but you've forgotten to line the pockets!

FRANTZ.

Bless my soul, so I have! (*giving a note.*)

TOKE.

The area-gate shall be left undefended. Do it quietly; no *claw*, as the French say.

FRANTZ.

Goot Mr. Toke—to-morrow I vill line de oter pocket.

[*Exit.*

TOKE.

My patron does not give me satisfaction!

Enter Footman.

FOOTMAN.

What chandeliers are to be lighted, Mr. Toke?—it's getting late.

TOKE.

Don't disturb me—I'm rum-mynating!—yes, yes, there's no doubt of it! Charles, the area-gate is open?

FOOTMAN.

And all the plate in the pantry! I'll run and—

TOKE.

Not a step! leave it open.

FOOTMAN.

But——

TOKE (*with dignity*).

It's for the sake of ventilation! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE 2.

A splendid saloon in EVELYN'S *house.*

EVELYN, GRAVES.

GRAVES.

You've withdrawn your money from Flash and Brisk?

EVELYN.

No.

GRAVES.

No!—then——

Enter SIR JOHN, LADY FRANKLIN, *and* GEORGINA.

SIR JOHN.

You got the cheque for 500*l.* safely?—too happy to——

EVELYN (*interrupting him*).

My best thanks!—my warmest gratitude! So kind in you! so seasonable!—that 500*l.*—you don't know the value of that 500*l.* I shall never forget your nobleness of conduct.

SIR JOHN.

Gratitude! Nobleness!—(*Aside.*) I can't have been taken in?

EVELYN.

And in a moment of such distress!

SIR JOHN (*aside*).

Such distress! He picks out the ugliest words in the whole dictionary!

EVELYN.

I've done with Smooth. But I'm still a little crippled, and you must do me *another* favour. I've only as yet paid the deposit of ten per cent for the great Groginhole property. I am to pay the rest this week—nay, I fear, to-morrow. I've already sold out of the Funds; the money lies at the banker's, and of course I can't touch it; for if I don't pay by a certain day, I forfeit the estate and the deposit.

SIR JOHN.

What's coming now, I wonder?

EVELYN.

Georgina's fortune is 10,000*l.* I always meant, my dear Sir John, to present you with that little sum.

SIR JOHN.

Oh, Evelyn! your generosity is positively touching.

[*Wipes his eyes.*

EVELYN.

But the news of my losses has frightened my tradesmen! I have so many heavy debts at this moment that—that—that——. But I see Georgina is listening, and I'll say what I have to say to her.

SIR JOHN.

No, no—no, no. Girls don't understand business!

EVELYN.

The very reason I speak to her. This is an affair not of business, but of *feeling*. Stout, show Sir John my Correggio.

SIR JOHN (*aside*).

Devil take his Correggio! The man is born to torment me!

EVELYN.

My dear Georgina, whatever you may hear said of me, I flatter myself that you feel confidence in my honour.

GEORGINA.

Can you doubt it?

EVELYN.

I confess that I am embarrassed at this moment: I have been weak enough to lose money at play: and there are other demands on me. I promise you never to gamble again as long as I live. My affairs can be retrieved; but for the first few years of our marriage it may be necessary to retrench.

GEORGINA.

Retrench!

EVELYN.

To live, perhaps, altogether in the country.

GEORGINA.

Altogether in the country!

EVELYN.

To confine ourselves to a modest competence.

GEORGINA.

Modest competence! I knew something horrid was coming!

EVELYN.

And now, Georgina, you may have it in your power at this moment to save me from much anxiety and humiliation. My money is locked up—my debts of honour must be settled—you are of age—your 10,000*l.* in your own hands——

SIR JOHN (STOUT *listening as well as* SIR JOHN).

I'm standing on hot iron!

EVELYN.

If you could lend it to me for a few weeks——You hesitate! oh! believe the honour of the man you will call your husband before all the calumnies of the fools whom we call the world! Can you give me this proof of your confidence? Remember, without confidence, what is wedlock?

SIR JOHN (*aside to her*).

No! (*Aloud, pointing his glass at the Correggio*) Yes, the painting may be fine.

STOUT.

But you don't like the subject?

GEORGINA (*aside*).

He may be only trying me! Best leave it to papa.

EVELYN.

Well——

GEORGINA.

You—you shall hear from me to-morrow.—(*Aside*) Ah, there's that dear Sir Frederick! [*Goes to* BLOUNT.

Enter GLOSSMORE *and* SMOOTH; EVELYN *salutes them, paying* SMOOTH *servile respect.*

LADY FRANKLIN (*to* GRAVES).

Ha! ha! To be so disturbed yesterday,—was it not droll?

GRAVES.

Never recur to that humiliating topic.

GLOSSMORE (*to* STOUT).

See how Evelyn fawns upon Smooth!

STOUT.

How mean in him!—*Smooth*—a professional gambler—a fellow who lives by his wits! I would not know such a man on any account!

SMOOTH (*to* GLOSSMORE).

So Hopkins is dead—you want Cipher to come in for Groginhole, eh?

GLOSSMORE.

What!—could *you* manage it?

SMOOTH.

Ce cher Charles!—anything to oblige!

STOUT.

Groginhole! What can he have to do with Groginhole? Glossmore, present me to Smooth.

GLOSSMORE.

What! the gambler—the fellow who lives by his wits?

STOUT.

Why, his wits seem to be an uncommonly productive capital! I'll introduce myself. How d'ye do, Captain Smooth? We have met at the club, I think—I am charmed to make your acquaintance in private. I say, sir, what do you think of the affairs of the nation? Bad!—very bad!—no enlightenment!—great fall off in the revenue!—no knowledge of finance! There's only one man who can save the country—and that's POPKINS!

SMOOTH.

Is he in Parliament, Mr. Stout? What's your Christian name, by the by?

STOUT.

Benjamin.—No;—constituencies are so ignorant, they don't understand his value. He's no orator: in fact, he stammers so much—but devilish profound. Could not we ensure him for Groginhole?

SMOOTH.

My dear Benjamin, it's a thing to be thought on.

EVELYN (*advancing*).

My friends, pray be seated;—I wish to consult you. This day twelvemonths I succeeded to an immense income, and as, by a happy coincidence, on the same day I secured your esteem, so now I wish to ask you if you think I could have spent that income in a way more worthy your good opinion?

GLOSSMORE.

Impossible!—excellent taste!—beautiful house!

BLOUNT.

Vewy good horses—(*Aside to* GLOSSMORE) especially the gwey cab!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Splendid pictures!

GRAVES.

And a magnificent cook, ma'am!

SMOOTH (*thrusting his hands into his pockets*).

It's my opinion, Alfred—and I'm a judge—that you could not have spent your money better!

OMNES (*except* SIR JOHN).

Very true!

EVELYN.

What say *you*, Sir John? You may think me a little extravagant; but you know that in this world the only way to show one's self thoroughly respectable is to make a thoroughly respectable show.

SIR JOHN.

Certainly—certainly! No, you could not have done better. (*Aside*) I don't know what to make of it.

GEORGINA.

Certainly.—(*Coaxingly.*) Don't retrench, my dear Alfred!

GLOSSMORE.

Retrench! nothing so plebeian!

STOUT.

Plebeian, sir!—worse than plebeian!—it is against all the rules of public morality. Every one knows, now-a-days, that extravagance is a benefit to the population—encourages art—employs labour—and multiplies spinning-jennies.

EVELYN.

You reassure me! I own I did think that a man worthy of friends so sincere might have done something better than feast—dress—drink—play——

GLOSSMORE.

Nonsense!—we like you the better for it. (*Aside*) I wish I had my 600*l.* back, though.

EVELYN.

And you are as much my friends now as when you offered me 10*l.* for my old nurse?

SIR JOHN.

A thousand times more so, my dear boy! [*Omnes approve.*

Enter SHARP.

SMOOTH.

But who's our new friend?

EVELYN.

Who! the very man who first announced to me the wealth which you allow I have spent so well. But what's the matter, Sharp?

SHARP (*whispering* EVELYN).

EVELYN (*aloud*).

The bank's *broke!*

SIR JOHN.

Broke!—what bank?

EVELYN.

Flash, Brisk, and Co.

GLOSSMORE (*to* SMOOTH).

And Flash was your brother-in-law. I'm very sorry.

SMOOTH (*taking snuff*).

Not at all, Charles,—I did not bank there.

SIR JOHN.

But I warned you—you withdrew?

EVELYN.

Alas! no!

SIR JOHN.

Oh! Not much in their hands?

EVELYN.

Why, I told you the purchase-money for Groginhole was at my banker's——But no, no: don't look so frightened! It was not placed with Flash—it is at Hoare's—it is, indeed. Nay, I assure you it is. A mere trifle at Flash's—upon my word, now! To-morrow, Sharp, we'll talk of this! One day more—one day, at least, for enjoyment!

SIR JOHN.

Oh! a pretty enjoyment!

BLOUNT.

And he borrowed 700*l.* of me!

GLOSSMORE.

And 600*l.* of me!

SIR JOHN.

And 500*l.* of me!

STOUT.

Oh! a regular Jeremy Diddler!

SMOOTH (*to* SIR JOHN).

John, do you know, I think I would take a handsome

offer for this house just as it stands—furniture, plate, pictures, books, bronzes, and statues!

SIR JOHN.

Powers above!

STOUT (*to* SIR JOHN).

I say you have placed your daughter in a very unsafe investment. What then?—a daughter's like any other capital—transfer the stock in hand to t' other speculation.

SIR JOHN (*going to* GEORGINA).

Ha! I'm afraid we've been very rude to Sir Frederick. A monstrous fine young man!

Enter TOKE.

TOKE (*to* EVELYN).

Sir, I beg your pardon, but Mr. Macfinch insists on my giving you this letter instantly.

EVELYN (*reading*).

How! Sir John, this fellow, Macfinch, has heard of my misfortunes, and insists on being paid;—a lawyer's letter—quite insolent!

TOKE.

And, sir, Mr. Tabouret is below, and declares he won't stir till he's paid.

EVELYN.

Won't stir till he's paid! What's to be done, Sir John?—Smooth, what *is* to be done?

SMOOTH.

If he won't stir till he's paid, make him up a bed, and I'll take him in the inventory as one of the fixtures, Alfred!

EVELYN.

It is very well for you to joke, Mr. Smooth. But——

Enter Sheriff's Officer, *giving a paper to* EVELYN, *and whispering.*

EVELYN.

What's this? Frantz, the tailor. Why, the impudent scoundrel! Faith, this is more than I bargained for—Sir John, the bailiffs are in the house!

STOUT (*slapping* SIR JOHN *on the back with glee*).

The bailiffs are in the house, old gentleman! But I didn't lend him a farthing.

EVELYN.

And for a mere song—150*l.*! Sir John, pay this fellow, will you? or see that my people kick out the bailiffs, or do it yourself, or something,—while we go to dinner!

SIR JOHN.

Pay—kick—I'll be d——d if I do!—Oh, my 500*l.*! my 500*l.*! Mr. Alfred Evelyn, I want my 500*l.*!

GRAVES.

I'm going to do a very silly thing—I shall lose both my friend and my money;—just like my luck!—Evelyn, go to dinner—I'll settle this for you.

LADY FRANKLIN.

I love you for that!

GRAVES.

Do you? then I am the happiest—Ah! ma'am, I don't know what I am saying! [*Exeunt* GRAVES *and* Officer.

EVELYN (*to* GEORGINA).

Don't go by these appearances! I repeat, 10,000*l.* will more than cover all my embarrassments. I shall hear from you to-morrow?

GEORGINA.

Yes—yes!

EVELYN.

But you're not going?——You, too, Glossmore?—you, Blount?—you, Stout?—you, Smooth?

SMOOTH.

No; I'll stick by you as long as you've a guinea to stake!

GLOSSMORE.

Oh, this might have been expected from a man of such ambiguous political opinions!

STOUT.

Don't stop me, Sir! No man of common enlightenment would have squandered his substance in this way. Pictures and statues?—baugh!

EVELYN.

Why, you all said I could not spend my money better! Ha! ha! ha!—the absurdest mistake!—You don't fancy I'm going to prison?—Ha! ha!—Why don't you laugh, Sir John?—Ha! ha! ha!

SIR JOHN.

Sir, this horrible levity!—Take Sir Frederick's arm, my poor, injured, innocent child!—Mr. Evelyn, after this extraordinary scene, you can't be surprised that I—I—Zounds! I'm suffocating!

SMOOTH.

But, my dear John, it is for us at least to put an execution on the dinner.

STOUT (*aside*).

The election at Groginhole is to-morrow. This news may not arrive before the poll closes.—(*Rushing to* EVELYN) Sir, Popkins never bribes: but Popkins will bet you 1000*l.* that he don't come in for Groginhole.

GLOSSMORE.

This is infamous, Mr. Stout! Cipher is a man who scorns every subterfuge!—(*Aside to* EVELYN) But, for the sake of the Constitution, name your price.

EVELYN.

I know the services of Cipher—I know the profundity of Popkins; but it's too late—the borough's engaged!

TOKE.

Dinner is served.

GLOSSMORE (*pausing*).

Dinner!

STOUT.

Dinner! it's a very good smell!

EVELYN (*to* SIR JOHN).

Turtle and venison, too. [*They stop irresolute.*

EVELYN.

That's right—come along. But, I say, Blount—Stout—Glossmore—Sir John—one word first: will you lend me 10*l.* for my old nurse? [*They all fall back.*

Ah! you fall back.—Behold a lesson for all who build friendship upon their fortune, and not their virtues!—You lent me hundreds this morning to squander upon pleasure—you would refuse me 10*l.* now to bestow upon benevolence. Go—we have done with each other—go!

[*Exeunt, indignantly, all but* EVELYN *and* SMOOTH.

Re-enter GRAVES.

GRAVES.

Heyday!—what's all this?

EVELYN.

Ha! ha!—the scheme prospers—the duper *is* duped! Come, my friends—come: when the standard of money goes down, in the great battle between man and fate—why, a bumper to the brave hearts that refuse to desert us!

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

** * * * *'s Club;* SMOOTH, GLOSSMORE—*other Members.*

GLOSSMORE.

Will his horses be sold, think you?

SMOOTH.

Very possibly, Charles!—a fine stud—hum! ha!—Waiter, a glass of sherry!

GLOSSMORE.

They say he must go abroad!

SMOOTH.

Well! it's the best time of year for travelling, Charles!

GLOSSMORE.

We are all to be paid to-day: and that looks suspicious!

SMOOTH.

Very suspicious, Charles! Hum!—ah!

GLOSSMORE.

My dear fellow, you must know the rights of the matter: I wish you'd speak out. What have you really won? Is the house itself gone?

SMOOTH.

The house itself is certainly not gone, Charles, for I saw it exactly in the same place this morning at half-past ten—it has not moved an inch!

[Waiter *gives a letter to* GLOSSMORE.

GLOSSMORE (*reading*).

From Groginhole—an express! What's this? I'm amazed!!! (*Reading*) "They've actually, at the eleventh hour, started Mr. Evelyn; and nobody knows what his politics are! We shall be *beat!*—the Constitution is gone! —CIPHER!" Oh! this is infamous in Evelyn! Gets into Parliament just to keep himself out of the Bench.

SMOOTH.

He's capable of it!

GLOSSMORE.

Not a doubt of it, sir!—not a doubt of it!

Enter SIR JOHN *and* BLOUNT, *talking.*

SIR JOHN.

My dear boy, I'm not flint! I am but a man! If Georgina really loves you—and I am sure that she *does*—I will never think of sacrificing her happiness to ambition—she is yours; I told her so this very morning.

BLOUNT (*aside*).

The old humbug!

SIR JOHN.

She's the best of daughters!—the most obedient, artless creature! Oh! she's been properly brought up: a good daughter makes a good wife. Dine with me at seven, and we'll talk of the settlements.

BLOUNT.

Yes; I don't care for fortune; but——

SIR JOHN.

Her 10,000*l.* will be settled on herself—that of course.

BLOUNT.

All of it, sir? Weally, I——

SIR JOHN.

What *then*, my dear boy? I shall leave you both all I've laid by. Ah! you know I'm a close fellow! "Stingy Jack"—eh? After all, worth makes the man!

SMOOTH.

And the more a man's worth, John, the worthier man he must be! [*Exit.*

BLOUNT (*aside*).

Yes; he has no other child! She *must* have all his savings; I don't see what harm it could do me. Still that 10,000*l.*—I want that 10,000*l.*: if she would but wun off now, one could get wid of the settlements.

Enter STOUT (*wiping his forehead*), *and takes* SIR JOHN *aside.*

STOUT.

Sir John, we've been played upon! My secretary is brother to Flash's head clerk; Evelyn had not 800*l.* in the bank!

SIR JOHN.

Bless us and save us! you take away my breath! But then—Deadly Smooth—the execution—the—oh, he must be done up!

STOUT.

As to Smooth, he'd "do anything to oblige." All a

trick, depend upon it! Smooth has already deceived me, for before the day's over Evelyn will be member for Groginhole. I've had an express from Popkins; he's in despair! not for *himself*—but for the *country*, Sir John—what's to become of the country?

SIR JOHN.

But what could be Evelyn's *object?*

STOUT.

Object? Do you look for an object in a whimsical creature like that? A man who has not even any political opinions! Object! Perhaps to break off his match with your daughter! Take care, Sir John, or the borough will be lost to your family!

SIR JOHN.

Aha! I begin to smell a rat! But it's not too late yet.

STOUT.

My interest in Popkins made me run to Lord Spendquick, the late proprietor of Groginhole. I told him that Evelyn could not pay the rest of the money; and *he* told me that——

SIR JOHN.

What?

STOUT.

Mr. Sharp had just paid it him. There's no hope for Popkins! England will rue this day!

SIR JOHN.

Georgina shall lend him the money! *I'll* lend him—every man in my house shall lend him—I feel again what it is to be a father-in-law!—(*Aside*) But stop; I'll be cautious. Stout may be on his side—a trap—not likely; but I'll go first to Spendquick myself. Sir Frederick, excuse me—you can't dine with me to-day. And, on second thoughts, I see it would be very unhandsome to desert poor Evelyn now he's down in the world. Can't think of it, my dear boy—can't think of it! Very much honoured, and happy to see you as a friend. Waiter! my carriage! Um! What, humbug *Stingy Jack*, will they? Ah! a good joke, indeed! [*Exit.*

BLOUNT.

Mr. Stout, what have you been saying to Sir John? Something against my chawacter; I know you have; don't deny it. Sir, I shall expect satisfaction!

STOUT.

Satisfaction, Sir Frederick? as if a man of enlightenment had any satisfaction in fighting! Did not mention your

name; we were talking of Evelyn. Only think!—he's no more ruined than you are.

BLOUNT.

Not wuined! Aha, now I understand!—So, so! Stay, let me see—she's to meet me in the square! (*Pulls out his watch; a very small one.*)

STOUT (*pulling out his own; a very large one*).

I must be off to the vestry.

BLOUNT.

Just in time!—ten thousand pounds! 'Gad, my blood's up, and I won't be tweated in *this* way, if he were fifty times Stingy Jack! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The drawing-rooms in SIR JOHN VESEY'S *house.*

LADY FRANKLIN, GRAVES.

GRAVES.

Well, well, I am certain that poor Evelyn loves Clara still; but you can't persuade me that she cares for him.

LADY FRANKLIN.

She has been breaking her heart ever since she heard of his distress. Nay, I am sure she would give all she has, could it save him from the consequences of his folly.

GRAVES (*half aside*).

She would only give him his own money, if she did. I should like just to sound her.

LADY FRANKLIN (*ringing the bell*).

And you shall. I take so much interest in her, that I forgive your friend everything but his offer to Georgina.

Enter Servant.

Where are the young ladies?

SERVANT.

Miss Vesey is, I believe, still in the square: Miss Douglas is just come in, my lady.

LADY FRANKLIN.

What! did she go out with Miss Vesey?

SERVANT.

No, my lady; I attended her to Drummond's the banker. [*Exit*

LADY FRANKLIN.

Drummond's!

Enter CLARA.

Why, child, what on earth could take you to Drummond's at this hour of the day?

CLARA (*confused*).

Oh, I——that is—I—Ah, Mr. Graves! How is Mr. Evelyn? How does he bear up against so sudden a reverse?

GRAVES.

With an awful calm. I fear all is not right here! (*touching his head*).—The report in the town is, that he must go abroad instantly—perhaps to-day!

CLARA.

Abroad?—to-day!

GRAVES.

But all his creditors will be paid; and he only seems anxious to know if Miss Vesey remains true in his misfortunes.

CLARA.

Ah! he loves her so *much*, then!

GRAVES.

Um!—that's more than I can say.

CLARA.

She told me, last night, that he said to the last that 10,000*l.* would free him from all his liabilities—that was the sum, was it not?

GRAVES.

Yes; he persists in the same assertion. Will Miss Vesey lend it?

LADY FRANKLIN (*aside*).

If she does, I shall not think so well of her poor dear mother; for I am sure she'd be no child of Sir John's!

GRAVES.

I should like to convince myself that my poor friend has nothing to hope from a woman's generosity.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Civil! And are men, then, less covetous?

GRAVES.

I know one man, at least, who, rejected in his poverty by one as poor as himself, no sooner came into a sudden fortune than he made his lawyer invent a codicil which the testator never dreamt of, bequeathing independence to the woman who had scorned him.

LADY FRANKLIN.

And never told her?

GRAVES.

Never! There's no such document at Doctors' Commons, depend on it! You seem incredulous, Miss Clara! Good day!

CLARA (*following him*).

One word, for mercy's sake! Do I understand you right? Ah, how could I be so blind! Generous Evelyn!

GRAVES.

You appreciate, and *Georgina* will desert him. Miss Douglas, he loves you still.——If that's not just like me! Meddling with other people's affairs, as if they were worth it—hang them! [*Exit.*

CLARA.

Georgina will desert him. Do you think so?—~~(Aside.)~~ ~~Ah, he will~~ soon discover that she ~~never wrote that letter!~~—

LADY FRANKLIN.

She told me last night, that she would never see him again. To do her justice, she's less interested than her father,—and as much attached as she can be to another. Even while engaged to Evelyn she has met Sir Frederick every day in the square.

CLARA.

And he is alone—sad—forsaken—ruined! And I, whom he enriched—I, the creature of his bounty—I, once the woman of his love—I stand idly here to content myself with tears and prayers! Oh, Lady Franklin, have pity on me—on him! We are both of kin to him—as relations we have both a right to comfort! Let us go to him—come!

LADY FRANKLIN.

No! it would scarcely be right—remember the world—I cannot!

CLARA.

All abandon him?—then I will go alone!

LADY FRANKLIN.

You!—so proud—so sensitive!

CLARA.

Pride—when he wants a friend?

LADY FRANKLIN.

His misfortunes are his own fault—a gambler!

CLARA.

Can you think of his faults now? *I* have no right to

do so. All I have—all—his gift!—and I never to have dreamed it!

LADY FRANKLIN.

But if Georgina do indeed release him—if she have already done so—what will he think? What but——

CLARA.

What but—that, if he love me still, I may have enough for both, and I am by his side! But that is too bright a dream. He told me I might call him brother! Where, now, should a sister be?——But—but—I—I—I tremble! If, after all—if—if——In one word—Am I too bold? The world—my conscience can answer *that*—but do you think that HE could despise me?

LADY FRANKLIN.

No, Clara, no! Your fair soul is too transparent for even libertines to misconstrue. Something tells me that this meeting may make the happiness of both! You cannot go alone. My presence justifies all. Give me your hand—we will go together! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Room in EVELYN'S *house.*

EVELYN.

Yes; as yet, all surpasses my expectations. I am sure of Smooth—I have managed even Sharp: my election will seem but an escape from a prison. Ha! ha! True, it cannot last long; but a few hours more are all I require, and for that time at least I shall hope to be thoroughly ruined.

Enter GRAVES.

Well, Graves, and what do people say of me?

GRAVES.

Everything that's bad!

EVELYN.

Three days ago I was universally respected. I awake this morning to find myself singularly infamous. Yet I'm the same man.

GRAVES.

Humph! why gambling——

EVELYN.

Cant! it was not criminal to gamble—it was criminal to

lose. Tut!—will you deny that if I had ruined Smooth instead of myself, every hand would have grasped mine yet more cordially, and every lip would have smiled congratulation on my success? Man—Man! I've not been rich and poor for nothing! The Vices and the Virtues are written in a language the World cannot construe; it reads them in a vile translation, and the translators are—FAILURE and SUCCESS! You alone are unchanged.

GRAVES.

There's no merit in that. I am always ready to mingle my tears with any man.—(*Aside*) I know I'm a fool, but I can't help it. Hark ye, Evelyn! I like you—I'm rich: and anything I can do to get you out of your hobble will give me an excuse to grumble for the rest of my life. There, now it's out.

EVELYN (*touched*).

There's something good in human nature after all! My dear friend, I will now confide in you: I am not the spendthrift you think me—my losses have been trifling—not a month's income of my fortune (GRAVES *shakes him heartily by the hand*). No! it has been but a stratagem to prove if the love, on which was to rest the happiness of a whole life, were given to the Money or the Man. Now you guess why I have asked from Georgina this one proof of confidence and affection—Think you she will give it?

GRAVES.

Would you break your heart if she did not?

EVELYN.

It is in vain to deny that I still love Clara; our last conversation renewed feelings which would task all the energies of my soul to conquer. What then? I am not one of those, the Sybarites of sentiment, who deem it impossible for humanity to conquer love—who call their own weakness the voice of a resistless destiny. Such is the poor excuse of every woman who yields her honour, of every adulterer who betrays his friend. No! the heart was given to the soul as its ally, not as its traitor.

GRAVES.

What do you tend to?

EVELYN.

This:—If Georgina still adhere to my fortunes (and I will not put her to too harsh a trial); if she can face the prospect, not of ruin and poverty, but of a moderate independence; if, in one word, she love me for myself, I will shut Clara for ever from my thoughts. I am pledged to Geor-

gina, and I will carry to the altar a soul resolute to deserve her affection and fulfil its vows.

GRAVES.

And if she reject you?

EVELYN (*joyfully*).

If she do, I am free once more! And then—then I will dare to ask, for I can ask without dishonour, if Clara can explain the past and bless the future!

Enter Servant *with a letter.* R

EVELYN (*after reading it*).

The die is cast—the dream is over! Generous girl! Oh, Georgina! I will deserve you yet.

GRAVES.

Georgina! is it possible?

EVELYN.

And the delicacy, the womanhood, the exquisite grace of this! How we misjudge the depth of the human heart! How, seeing the straws on the surface, we forget that the pearls may lie hid below!* I imagined her incapable of this devotion.

GRAVES.

And *I, too.*

EVELYN.

It were base in me to continue this trial a moment longer: I will write at once to undeceive that generous heart. [*Writing.*

GRAVES.

I would have given 1000*l.* if that little jade Clara had been beforehand. But just like my luck: if I want a man to marry one woman, he's sure to marry another on purpose to vex me! [EVELYN *rings the bell.*

Enter Servant. R

EVELYN.

Take this instantly to Miss Vesey; say I will call in an hour. (*Exit* Servant.) R And now Clara is resigned for ever! Why does my heart sink within me? Why, why, looking to the fate to come, do I see only the memory of what has been?

GRAVES.

You are re-engaged then to Georgina?

EVELYN.

Irrevocably.

* "Errors, like straws," &c.

SCENE IV.

Enter Servant, announcing LADY FRANKLIN *and* MISS DOUGLAS.——EVELYN, GRAVES.

LADY FRANKLIN.

My dear Evelyn, you may think it strange to receive such visitors at this moment; but, indeed, it is no time for ceremony. We are your relations—it is reported you are about to leave the country—we come to ask frankly what we can do to serve you?

EVELYN.

Madam—I——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Come, come—do not hesitate to confide in us; Clara is less a stranger to you than I am: your friend here will perhaps let me consult with him.—(*Aside to* GRAVES) Let us leave them to themselves.

GRAVES.

You're an angel of a widow; but you come too late, as whatever is good for anything generally does.

[*They retire into the inner room, which should be partially open.*

EVELYN.

Miss Douglas, I may well want words to thank you; this goodness—this sympathy——

CLARA (*abandoning herself to her emotion*). ——Evelyn! Evelyn! Do not talk thus!—Goodness; sympathy!—I have learned *all—all!* It is for ME to speak of *gratitude!* What! even when I had so wounded you—when you believed me mercenary and cold—when you thought that I was blind and base enough not to know you for what you are;—even *at that time* you thought but of my happiness—my fortune—my fate!—And to you—you—I owe all that has raised the poor orphan from servitude and dependence! While your words were so bitter, your deeds so gentle! Oh, noble Evelyn, this, then, was your revenge!

EVELYN.

You owe me no thanks—that revenge was sweet! Think you it was nothing to feel that my presence haunted you, though you knew it not?—that in things, the pettiest as the

greatest, which that gold could buy—the very jewels you wore—the very robe in which, to other eyes, you might seem more fair—in all in which you took the woman's young and innocent delight—*I* had a part—a share? that, even if separated for ever—even if another's—even in distant years—perhaps in a happy home, listening to sweet voices that might call you "mother!"—even then should the uses of that dross bring to your lips one smile—that smile was mine—due to me—due, as a sacred debt, to the hand that you rejected—to the love that you despised!

CLARA.

— Despised! See the proof that I despised you!—see: in this hour, when they say you are again as poor as before, I forget the world—my pride—perhaps too much my sex: I remember but your sorrows—I am here!

EVELYN (*aside*).

~~Oh, Heaven! give me strength to bear it~~!—(*Aloud*) And is this the same voice that, when I knelt at your feet—when I asked but *one day* the hope to call you mine—spoke only of poverty, and answered "*Never?*"

CLARA.

— Because I had been unworthy of your love if I had ensured your misery. Evelyn, hear me! My father, like you, was poor—generous; gifted, like you, with genius—ambition: sensitive, like you, to the least breath of insult. He married, as you would have done—married one whose only dower was penury and care! Alfred, I saw that genius the curse to itself!—I saw that ambition wither to despair!—I saw the struggle—the humiliation—the proud man's agony—the bitter life—the early death!—and heard over his breathless clay my mother's groan of self-reproach! Alfred Evelyn, now speak! Was the woman you loved so nobly to repay you with such a doom?

EVELYN.

Clara, we should have shared it.

CLARA.

— Shared? Never let the woman who really loves, comfort her selfishness with such delusion! In marriages like this the wife cannot share the burden; it is he—the husband—to provide, to scheme, to work, to endure—to grind out his strong heart at the miserable wheel! The wife, alas! cannot share the struggle—she can but witness the despair! And therefore, Alfred, I rejected you.

EVELYN.

Yet you believe me as poor now as I was then?

CLARA.

But *I* am not poor; *we* are not so poor! Of this fortune, which is all your own—if, as I hear, one-half would free you from your debts, why, we have the other half still left. Evelyn! it is humble—but it is not penury.

EVELYN.

Cease, cease—you know not how you torture me. Oh, that when hope was possible;—oh, that you had bid me take it to my breast and wait for a brighter day!

CLARA.

And so have consumed your life of life upon a hope perhaps delayed till age—shut you from a happier choice, from fairer fortunes—shackled you with vows that, as my youth and its poor attributes decayed, would only have irritated and galled—made your whole existence one long suspense! No, Alfred, even *yet* you do not know me!

EVELYN.

Know you! Fair angel, too excellent for man's harder nature to understand!—at least it is permitted me to revere. Why were such blessed words not vouchsafed to me before?—why, why come they now?—too late! Oh, Heaven—too late!

CLARA.

Too late! What, then, have I said?

EVELYN.

Wealth! what is it without you? *With* you, I recognise its power; to forestall your every wish—to smooth your every path—to make all that life borrows from Grace and Beauty your ministrant and handmaid; and then, looking to those eyes, to read there the treasures of a heart that excelled all that kings could lavish;—why *that* were to make gold indeed a god! But vain—vain—vain! Bound by every tie of faith, gratitude, loyalty, and honour, to another.

CLARA.

Another! Is she, then, true to your reverses? I did not know this—indeed, I did not! And I have thus betrayed myself! Oh, shame! he must despise me now!

SCENE V.

The foregoing.—Enter SIR JOHN; *at the same time* GRAVES *and* LADY FRANKLIN *advance from the inner room.*

SIR JOHN (*with dignity and frankness*).

Evelyn, I was hasty yesterday. You must own it natural that I should be so. But Georgina has been so urgent in your defence, that——(*as* LADY FRANKLIN *comes up to listen*) Sister, just shut the door, will you?——that I cannot resist her. What's money without happiness? So give me your security; for she insists on lending you the 10,000*l.*

EVELYN.

I know; and have already received it.

SIR JOHN.

Already received it! Is he joking? Faith, for the last two days I believe I have been living amongst the Mysteries of Udolpho! Sister, have you seen Georgina?

LADY FRANKLIN.

Not since she went out to walk in the square.

SIR JOHN (*aside*).

She's not in the square nor the house—where the deuce can the girl be?

EVELYN.

I have written to Miss Vesey—I have asked her to fix the day for our wedding.

SIR JOHN (*joyfully*).

Have you? Go, Lady Franklin, find her instantly—she must be back by this time: take my carriage, it is but a step—you won't be two minutes gone.—(*Aside*) I'd go myself, but I'm afraid of leaving him a moment while he's in such excellent dispositions.

LADY FRANKLIN (*repulsing* CLARA).

No, no: stay till I return. [*Exit.*

SIR JOHN.

And don't be down-hearted, my dear fellow; if the worst come to the worst, you will have everything I can leave you. Meantime, if I can in any way help you——

EVELYN.

Ha!—you!—*you*, too? Sir John, you have seen my letter to Miss Vesey? (*Aside*) or could she have learned the truth before she ventured to be generous?

SIR JOHN.

No! on my honour. I only just called at the door on my way from Lord Spend —— that is, from the City. Georgina was out;—was ever anything so unlucky?—(*Without*) ["Hurrah—hurrah! Blue for ever!"]—What's that?

Enter SHARP.

SHARP.

Sir, a deputation from Groginhole—poll closed in the first hour—you are returned? Holloa, sir—holloa!

EVELYN.

And it was to please Clara!

SIR JOHN.

Mr. Sharp—Mr. Sharp—I say, how much has Mr. Evelyn lost by Messrs. Flash and Co.?

SHARP.

Oh, a great deal, sir,—a great deal.

SIR JOHN (*alarmed*).

How?—a great deal!

EVELYN.

Speak the truth, Sharp,—concealment is all over.

SHARP.

223*l.* 6*s.* 3*d.*—a great sum to throw away!

GRAVES.

Ah, I comprehend now! Poor Evelyn caught in his own trap!

SIR JOHN.

Eh! what, my dear boy?—what? Ha! ha! all humbug, was it?—all humbug, upon my soul! So, Mr. Sharp, isn't he ruined after all?—not the least, wee, rascally, little bit in the world, ruined?

SHARP.

Sir, he has never even lived up to his income.

SIR JOHN.

Worthy man! I could jump up to the ceiling! I am the happiest father-in-law in the three kingdoms.—And that's my sister's knock, too.

CLARA.

Since I was mistaken, cousin,—since, now, you do not need me,—forget what has passed; my business here is over. Farewell!

EVELYN.

Could you but see my heart at this moment, with what

love, what veneration, what anguish it is filled, you would know how little, in the great calamities of life, fortune is really worth. And must we part now,—*now*, when—when ——I never wept before, since my mother died!

Enter LADY FRANKLIN *and* GEORGINA, *followed by* BLOUNT, *who looks shy and embarrassed.*

GRAVES.

Georgina herself—then there's no hope.

SIR JOHN.

What the deuce brings that fellow Blount here?—Georgy, my dear Georgy, I want to——

EVELYN.

Stand back, Sir John!

SIR JOHN.

But I must speak a word to her—I want to——

EVELYN.

Stand back, I say,—not a whisper—not a sign. If your daughter is to be my wife, to *her* heart only will I look for a reply to *mine*.

LADY FRANKLIN (*to* GEORGINA).

Speak the truth, niece.

EVELYN.

Georgina, it is true, then, that you trust me with your confidence—your fortune? It is also true, that when you did so you believed me ruined? Oh, pardon the doubt! Answer as if your father stood not there—answer me from that truth the world cannot yet have plucked from your soul—answer as if the woe or weal of a life trembled in the balance—answer as the woman's heart, yet virgin and unpolluted, *should* answer to one who has trusted to it his all!

GEORGINA.

What can he mean?

SIR JOHN (*making signs*).

She won't look this way, she won't—hang her—HEM!

EVELYN.

You falter. I implore—I adjure you—answer!

LADY FRANKLIN.

The truth!

GEORGINA.

Mr. Evelyn, your fortune might well dazzle me, as it dazzled others. Believe me, I sincerely pity your reverses.

SIR JOHN.

Good girl! you hear her, Evelyn.

GEORGINA.

What's money without happiness?

SIR JOHN.

Clever creature!—my own sentiments!

GEORGINA.

And so, as our engagement is now annulled,—papa told me so this very morning,—I have promised my hand where I have given my heart—to Sir Frederick Blount.

SIR JOHN.

I told you,—I? No such thing—no such thing: you frighten her out of her wits—she don't know what she's saying.

EVELYN.

Am I awake? But this letter—this letter, received to-day——

LADY FRANKLIN (*looking over the letter*).

Drummond's—from a banker!

EVELYN.

Read—read.

LADY FRANKLIN.

"Ten thousand pounds just placed to your account—from the same unknown friend to Evelyn." Oh, Clara, I know now why you went to Drummond's this morning.

EVELYN.

Clara! What!—and the former one with the same signature, on the faith of which I pledged my hand and sacrificed my heart——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Was written under my eyes, and the secret kept that——

EVELYN.

Look up, look up, Clara—I am free!—I am released! You forgive me?—you love me?—you are mine! We are rich—rich! I can give you fortune, power,—I can devote to you my whole life, thought, heart, soul—I am all yours, Clara—my own—my wife!

SIR JOHN (*to* GEORGINA).

So, you've lost the game by a revoke, in trumping your own father's best of a suit!—Unnatural jade!—Aha, Lady Franklin—I am to thank you for this!

LADY FRANKLIN.

You've to thank me that she's not now on the road to

Scotland with Sir Frederick. I chanced on them by the Park just in time to dissuade and save her. But, to do her justice, a hint of your displeasure was sufficient.

GEORGINA (*half sobbing*).

And you know, papa, you said this very morning that poor Frederick had been very ill used, and you would settle it all at the club.

BLOUNT.

Come, Sir John, you can only blame yourself and Evelyn's cunning device. After all, I'm no such vewy bad match; and as for the 10,000*l.*——

EVELYN.

I'll double it. Ah, Sir John, what's money without happiness?

SIR JOHN.

Pshaw—nonsense—stuff! Don't humbug me!

LADY FRANKLIN.

But if you don't consent, she'll have no husband at all.

SIR JOHN.

Hum! there's something in that. (*Aside to* EVELYN) Double it, will you? Then settle it all *tightly* on her. Well—well—my foible is not avarice. Blount, make her happy, Child, I forgive you.—(*Pinching her arm*) Ugh, you fool!

GRAVES (*to* LADY FRANKLIN).

I'm afraid it's catching. What say you? I feel the symptoms of matrimony creeping all over me. Shall we, eh? Frankly, now, frankly——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Frankly, now, there's my hand, on one condition,—that we finish our reel on the wedding-day.

GRAVES.

Accepted. Is it possible? Sainted Maria! thank Heaven you are spared this affliction!

Enter SMOOTH.

SMOOTH.

How d'ye do, Alfred? I intrude, I fear! Quite a family party.

BLOUNT.

Wish us joy, Smooth—Georgina's mine, and——

SMOOTH.

And our four friends there apparently have made up another rubber. John, my dear boy, you look as if you had something at stake on the odd trick.

SIR JOHN.

Sir, you're very——Confound the fellow!—and he's a dead shot, too!

Enter STOUT *and* GLOSSMORE *hastily, talking with each other.*

STOUT.

I'm sure he's of our side; we've all the intelligence.

GLOSSMORE.

I'm sure he's of ours if his fortune is safe, for we've all the property.—My dear Evelyn, you were out of humour yesterday—but I forgive you.

STOUT.

Certainly!—what would become of public life if a man were obliged to be two days running in the same mind?—I rise to explain.—Just heard of your return, Evelyn! Congratulate you. The great motion of the session is fixed for Friday. We count on your vote. Progress with the times!

GLOSSMORE.

Preserve the Constitution!

STOUT.

Your money will do wonders for the party!—Advance!

GLOSSMORE.

The party respects men of your property! Stick fast!

EVELYN.

I have the greatest respect, I assure you, for the worthy and intelligent flies upon both sides the wheel; but whether we go too fast or too slow does not, I fancy, depend so much on the flies as on the Stout Gentleman who sits inside and pays the post-boys. Now all my politics as yet is to consider what's best for the Stout Gentleman!

SMOOTH.

Meaning John Bull, *Ce cher* old John!

STOUT.

I'm as wise as I was before.

GLOSSMORE.

Sir, he's a trimmer!

EVELYN.

Smooth, we have yet to settle our first piquet account and our last! And I sincerely thank you for the service you have rendered to me, and the lesson you have given these gentlemen.—(*Turning to* CLARA) Ah, Clara, you—you have succeeded where wealth had failed! You have reconciled me to the world and to mankind. My friends—

we must confess it—amidst the humours and the follies, the vanities, deceits, and vices that play their parts in the Great Comedy of Life—it is our own fault if we do not find such natures, though rare and few, as redeem the rest, brightening the shadows that are flung from the form and body of the TIME with glimpses of the everlasting holiness of truth and love.

GRAVES.

But for the truth and the love, when found, to make us tolerably happy, we should not be without——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Good health;

GRAVES.

Good spirits;

CLARA.

A good heart;

SMOOTH.

An innocent rubber;

GEORGINA.

Congenial tempers;

BLOUNT.

A pwoper degwee of pwudence;

STOUT.

Enlightened opinions;

GLOSSMORE.

Constitutional principles;

SIR JOHN.

Knowledge of the world;

EVELYN.

And——plenty of Money!